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# ITALIAN CITIES

VOL. II.











# PERUGIA

THE PORTA AUGUSTA





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# ITALIAN CITIES

BY

✓ EDWIN HOWLAND BLASHFIELD  
AND  
EVANGELINE WILBOUR BLASHFIELD

VOLUME II

WITH FORTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1902

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UNIVERSITY PRESS • JOHN WILSON  
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# PERUGIA

## I

PERUGIA on the map is like the Griffin of its escutcheon, a great tile-scaled dragon upon its rock crouching over the country and extending long paws down the valley side. Its head was once the citadel of Pope Paul III. built upon the site of the demolished Baglioni palaces, but the citizens in 1848 drew its teeth first, and then decapitated it. Its right paw, we must imagine to have partly supported its head and to now be doubled up over the modern Piazza d' Armi and hanging down the slope below; its extended left paw stretches far above the rock to the gates of Saint Jerome and the Ghezzi. The palaces of the Commonwealth and of the Captain of the People are its main vertebrae; one hind-paw lays its claws upon San Francesco, one passes out beyond the gate of the Sun, while the long undulating ridge that goes from the Augustan gate to that of Sant' Angelo, serves admirably for the monster's tail, and just as the tail of an Etruscan chimæra ends often in a serpent's head, thus at the Angel

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gate there is a tall brick tower battlemented and machicolated to sting and bite the enemies of Perugia.

There is nothing modern in the old city; there is Etruscan Perugia with its walls and gates; Roman Perugia, its masonry springing undistinguishable from the earlier courses, then becoming characterized as it grows; mediæval Perugia of the Baglioni built upon Roman foundations; Renaissance Perugia of the Popes, reared upon the ashes of Baglioni palaces; but there is no modern Perugia, there is no quarter planned for the capture of the stranger who has his sole sanctuary in the Brufani, excellent among Italian *alberghi*. There is perhaps an hundred feet of the main street swept and garnished for the tourist, gently swept, however, and garnished with old-time furnishings, of which the most modern feature is a smart, glass-fronted cake-shop, and even there the traveller is dispossessed by the *signori uffiziali*, the cavalry officers who sit resplendent and eat the cakes.

From every point around the town, the views are magnificent; from the Piazza d'Armi to the south and west and from the parapeted quarter of Porta Sole behind San Severo they are superlatively magnificent; within, no large town of Italy is so wildly picturesque; one holds the breath in making the statement, but does not recall it. It is not a pictu-



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resqueness of noble and beautifully ornamented forms, as in Verona, Venice, or Siena, but rather of accident, of irregularity, of rising and falling ground, of wonderful effects of light and shade and color. Everywhere one climbs or burrows. Everywhere save upon the spinal ridge the streets are on one side staircases which descend, on the other staircases which mount; nearly every vista is broken by arches crossing some narrow way to buttress or carry tall houses — arches which are apt to frame some grand picture of olive-covered hills and distant mountains. Add to this that there is color everywhere; yellows, reds, warm and cool grays, which take on many tones from the diversity of material employed, for in nearly every wall you find stones great and small, round and square, brick of every variety and color, put together without the least apparent choice. Probably it is because in little Perugia, left away behind the times in the race of cities, there has been no temptation to build since the sixteenth century, so that rebuilding has been only repatching and the nearest stone has filled the need and stopped the gap. From all this there results a picturesqueness of color delightful to any one and especially to the artist who longs for a varied surface which in painting may be handled brilliantly. The eye wanders over it always with pleasure, but it wanders without finding a resting place and after

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a while one longs for the concentration that comes in looking at the nobler forms of Florence or the more exquisite forms of Venice.

Of course we refer to the plastic: nature here is the model for the grand backgrounds of Perugino, but within the walls, one asks after a while whether Perugia contains anything of the very first order, and begins to weary of the vast number of things of the third and fourth rank that interest, but leave no wish for serious study.

The question is soon answered in the affirmative. Perugia contains two works of art of the very first interest and beauty, no mean possession for so small a town: the Sala del Cambio of Perugino, and the Etrusco-Roman gate called the Porta Augusta; and in addition to these it owns a noble town hall, the fascinating façade of San Bernardino, and Raphael's fresco of San Severo,—all possessing interest of what a French critic has called *premier-second ordre*. The Porta Augusta is one of the finest gates in the world; it beetles in black magnificence, like a cliff, above a whole quarter of the town. Its stones are dark with the deposits of centuries of dust and rain, and blackened by the fire that followed the footsteps of Lucius Antonius as his followers fell backward along the steep streets before the soldiers of the young Octavius. Black is the color of decay, it fears the light, and when the sun shines half the

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effectiveness is gone, but in the damp and gloom when mist is flying through the streets this gate is stupendous. No beauty of decoration could surpass the heavy stone bucklers and splaying fluted pilasters that make up the frieze or the plain letters which, each as tall as a man and following the rounding of the Arch, announce simply *Augusta Perusia*. Standing in the doorway of the little church below you may look up and winking hard once or twice, may see, far above, the three feathers in the casque of some Etruscan Volumnius or the steel jugulars of Roman helmets as the guards lean on the wall. These Umbrian cities seem so Roman that in the green vineyards an hundred feet below the Via Pin-turicchio, yet so near at hand, a rusty buckler with the thunderbolt upon it would appear to be the most natural find possible.

Only a month or two before our last visit to Perugia they unearthed armor, trinkets, and a woman's skeleton close by San Pietro. They are shown now in the Etruscan Museum. "*Che dentatura!*" said the *custode*, pointing at the skull; and truly "what teeth" they were! — even, brilliant, stronger, how many times stronger, than iron, since they had resisted twenty centuries, were unimpaired, and each one in its place, while helmet and thorax-piece were poor leprous-looking things with jagged, eaten edges. We added those teeth to our mental pic-

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ture, flashing broad smiles from under the dark Etruscan gate, in days when Perugia was one of "the Twelve," and Rome not yet thought of as a rival. The arch begins below with the masonry of Etruria, and passes to that of Rome. Close by it a mighty wall once safeguarded and still buttresses whole quarters of the town. Three minutes to the west of the gate if you follow the Street of the University you come to a long walk raised upon arches, bordered by a stone parapet at either side, and which, starting as the Via del Acquedotto, follows the line of the dragon's body until as the Via Appia it disappears under a Gothic archway, then climbs to the heart of the town.

Upon this strange Appian Way, this aqueduct street, abut now and then little houses which seem less comfortless than some of their fellows, since they are raised high and dry and are shut in on three sides by an amphitheatre of buildings; to carry out the simile of the Griffin, they crouch under his western ribs. While we are with the antique monuments we may as well follow the tail of the monster straight to its end through a quarter, mean, but beautiful in the color of its masonry, to the fortress gate of the Angel and another Roman souvenir, the round church of Sant' Angelo, who is of course Messer San Michele, but who masquerades in Mars's costume upon

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Vesta's property. So the guide-book said at least, with its readiness to call all round temples Vestal. This special building has been accredited also to Venus and to Vulcan, but we had read neither Dennis nor Lanciani nor anybody else about the derivation of the church, and in our first visit simply accepted the invitation of three Perugians (they may have footed up sixteen years among them) to see San Michele, and entered.

The building stands in a still, open, green place, is as desolate as those engine-house-looking baptisteries of Ravenna, has just such a forbidding shell, but inside, unlike the Ravennese examples, is equally rough. There are no mosaics; there are only sixteen columns in a circle, mostly of African marble; once there were many more of them, but they have been borrowed from Michael (or stolen from Vesta?) by other saints, notably Peter, who is *in casinense* at the other end of the town. Between each couple of the solemn shafts that support the arches is stuck a flat, painted, pasteboard pot of flowers with overlapping and curled up edges; what a deal of leisure time there has been in Italy (no two bouquets are alike) for the production of these sublime effects! The church was so warm and comfortable that it seemed as if the *fuoco inestinguibile* of Vesta had warmed it forever, but looking up at the wooden roof we realized that it was



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the sacred fire surely enough, but from the outside, that had done it all. Of course we looked at Saint Michael or Sant' Angelo as well. He wore *papier mâché* wings, a cloth of silver tunic, and a modern cuirassier's helmet, and with these and his girlish face suggested light cavalry, angels, and Joan of Arc. "This is the antique table," said the portress showing a wide slab of marble now raised as an altar; "here is the place for the fire to burn the martyrs." Naturally a good churchwoman would think of no better use for Vesta's flame, and in this Etruscan neighborhood, who knows? there were plenty of prisoner-martyrs long before Christianity.

We passed out under the gate tower, handsome in its ruddy brick, and the one small boy who had followed proposed that we should skirt the wall eastward a bit and "in a giardinetto see Madonna," but we preferred to see Thrasymene lying like a shining jade stone under the mist between the northern hills. Westward too the view was lovely, battle-mented wall again with the inevitable termination of church and convent, and the Scirre tower rising above all, while a puff of smoke in the valley beneath showed, said our baby, "the house where the train goes" — "*la casa dove va il treno.*" We re-entered the gates, our infant departed with the *soldo* which his arts had beguiled from us, and as we saw the bucklers of the arch again, so soon after Vesta's

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Michael-church, we thought that "hail to the fire that burns for aye and the shields that fell from heaven" would do as well in Perugia as on the seven hill-tops.

You go down the right hind paw, the north-western one, of the Griffin to reach San Bernardino; one may pass straight along the Via dei Priori, or behind a palace which shows graffiti ornament of exceptional richness and much elegance. Close at hand you pass under the "Majesty of the arches," "*La maestà dei volti*," superb remnants of a portion of the mediæval Town Hall burnt in the sixteenth century; it is quite impossible to reproduce it in photograph or drawing, since one must look right upward in the gloom at these grand brown fragments, dramatic in their half-calcined masonry and almost equalling the Augustan arch in effect. The street of the Priors is, like others, a long vista of picturesqueness; slanting steeply, winding about, with Sant' Agata on the left, Perugino's house in the Via Deliziosa, the tall Scirre tower, the handsome, little Renaissance church of "Our Lady of Light," fine views of distant wall and climbing streets, and at last a piazza with San Francesco in brown brick, and the *Oratorio*.

When San Bernardino preached on the square of the Duomo the whole population cried *Misericordia*, repented, and gave him their jewels, and he

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built his bonfire of Vanities three quarters of a century before Savonarola. The façade of his chapel is delicately lovely rather than impressive in its pale blue and red and yellowy white. The tongues of fire about the saint and the long vertical lines separating the surrounding angels from the centre are clumsily managed for an artist who composed the rest of his façade so well. It is strange that the angels with slits for mouths and button-holes for eyes and drapery of molasses candy at an interesting stage of pulling, should be so very alluring, but alluring they are. The virtues too, and other angels again who play the rebec or hurry along with tiny drums, suggest some Renaissance pack of playing-cards and are filled with the perilous fascination of mannerism. They are all by Agostino Fiorentino, whom one meets in Modena, and learns to know intimately in the Malatesta church at Rimini.

The excursion covering the extended left forepaw of the Griffin is one of the longest. From his hotel the traveller crosses the square behind the Prefecture and goes down the steep streets Marzia and Lomellina, and in three minutes he is an hundred feet below the square. It is all absurdly like a stage setting, but a very massive setting, scenic in its whole arrangement: above tower the bastions with their winding approach, still higher are the



PERUGIA

SAN BERNARDINO

AGOSTINO DI DUCCIO

ANGELS WITH MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS









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Prefecture and Brufani, and a half-hexagon of pink stucco. At the right, against the rock, its roof just on a level with the bases of the houses above, itself raised on a pedestal of *rampes*, is the octagonal church of Saint Herculanius; far above at the left a grand, battered antique arch is encrusted with all its sculptures in the masonry of San Gallo's bastion; a fine fountain is just in front of you at the base of the terraces; and to make it all quite perfect in its picturesqueness, peasants in gay colors come pouring down a steep street-stairway from under an arch in the Etruscan wall. St. Herculanius, good in lines and named for the bishop who stood a "seven years' siege" and died at the hands of his conqueror Totila, has been covered with gewgaw eighteenth-century painting. The high altar, looking out from amid paper roses and gilded wood, is an Etruscan sarcophagus with lions at the angles and the ridges between the flutings oxidized to a beautiful orange. On either end of the sarcophagus is a *bestiarius* urging or spearing a wild animal; the lions are peculiarly bold, and the altar is one of the good things in Perugia. San Domenico, a little further down the street, looks flayed without and is whitewashed within upon its ugly and late piers; the tomb of Benedict XI., famous in the history of early sculpture, is its treasure and the host of the transmarine pil-



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grim. Good Gothic wells abound in this quarter of the city and make the street interesting as one passes along to its end, where San Pietro raises its hybrid but rather graceful campanile, its apse abutting upon the open country at a great height above it and looking directly towards Assisi.

San Pietro is an ecclesiastical picture gallery, such an one as Santa Maria in Organis of Verona, Santa Maria alle Grazie of Milan, or Santa Cecilia in Venice. When the papal troops entered Perugia in 1859, the clergy of San Pietro sided with the people against them, and so the city left to the priests their treasure of pictures. This treasure is over-lavish in its expenditure. There is hardly a yard of plain surface left to repose the eye, everything is covered with scroll-work or subjects, some of the columns even having figures painted upon them, while a special feature of the church is the introduction of huge oil paintings, well enough in color but architectonically most unusual and unhandsome, each in a gold frame, and each covering an *entire bay* of the nave, from the top of the nave arches to the brilliant red, blue, and gold coffered ceiling. The sacristan recites the roll of painters, great or obscure, and then leads one to the choir-stalls, which are beautiful indeed. Perugia is rich in carved wood, and these stalls are world-famous.

As usual, the little mountain town of Bergamo

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has a good share in the glory. These carvings have been popularized by reproduction, are familiar to architects and decorators, and are worthy of a long visit for their invention, fancy, richness, and delicacy; nevertheless the sacristan who shows them is daily afflicted. He opens some shutters at the centre of the choir with the intention of showing some inlaid woodwork pictures, not nearly so well worth looking at as the carving, but marvels of unreality and unreasonableness, and therefore to his mind wonders of skill. Unfortunately (for him) the shutters open from this damp choir upon the mountains of Assisi. "*Guardi,*" he says, "*bellissimi!*" "*Bellissimi, davvero!*" the visitor replies with a deep breath. "No, no, the pictures," he insists; but he has let heaven's glory in all at once or earth's, which is the same thing, only reflected back, and his sightseers crowd out upon the balcony and look at Assisi quivering in the warm, sun-filled air, at Spello shining on its farther hill, at piled-up, glistening Trevi, and have no hunger for more pictures on that day's walk.

The rambles under the walls of Perugia are without exception wonderful. We made the tour of the whole town and repeated some of our excursions; perhaps the most remarkable is that on the western side from the Porta Susanna near San Francesco, to the Eburnea, the Ivory gate. The path describes

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the hollow of a great horseshoe, and everywhere the houses tower above, growing for two-thirds of the distance directly from bases of Etruscan masonry which often runs up to half the height of the buildings. It strikes the imagination of the American, who is an old settler if he counts a score of years of residence in one place, that these Perugians should to-day pay monthly rent for houses built in good part two thousand years ago !

The views are successive marvels of picturesqueness, and always in sight for a focal point, the apse of some church abuts upon the precipice. Between the horseshoe of house-topped wall and the Palazzo Pubblico there are whole climbing labyrinths of strangest narrow lanes, streets of the Moon, of Silence, of the Bear, of Darkness, of Good Changes, and in their midst, in the "Delicious Street" are the picturesque little house and courtyard of Perugino. "*Niente dentro*" nothing inside, said a passer ; nevertheless we stopped and sketched it without and within. Upon the Palace of the Taddei in Florence, an inscription tells us, "Here Raphael stayed as guest in 1505," and we know that he climbed the stone stairs there, but he seems somehow more real climbing the steep streets of Perugia to Perugino's house, or we may see him a few years later, going to paint his first fresco in San Severo, echoing there the work of his tonsured comrade of Florence, Baccio



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della Porta, and foreshadowing his own great composition of the *Disputà*. He went hence, indeed, to that larger career which called him, leaving the wall half uncovered, until, many years after, Perugino painted a row of saints along the lower masonry; these latter have been severely criticised, and people who are entertained by drawing morals may point out that Pietro's saints stand upon the earth, while Raphael's have attained the empyrean; but Perugino was an old man, and if he blinks here a little so close to the rays of the rising sun, at least he is not quite the owl that abuse would make him out, since he himself was one of the first to hail those rays; yet it must be confessed that his saints here are poor and feeble repetitions of those he painted in his best days.

The quarter about San Severo is wildly picturesque; the Via Matteoli might be called a cave which climbs a hill, and as you walk these streets some Perusino a few paces before you suddenly disappears in trap-door fashion; he has dropped down into his courtyard or garden by means of half a dozen steep steps. It is absurd, this disappearance, and can hardly be realized until seen, but it suggests that Perugia's constant brawling may in part have come from the fact that the configuration of the ground yielded points in every quarter of the city that were natural fortresses easily defensible against

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anything save overwhelming force. The view from the platform near by San Severo, looking eastward, for this is the northeast quarter of the town, is only less beautiful, less grand in its vast panorama than that from the Piazza d'Armi. As you walk down the eastern declivity, a level line of houses, an artificial precipice upon a natural one rises above you, tower and wall and foundation of church ascend as you descend, almost as rapidly as painted towers of stage scenery are craned upward into the flies; until you reach the Pinturicchio Street and the long Bersaglieri Corso, a quarter of the poor, but seemingly built of nuggets of pure gold, so rich is it in colors, tawny, russet, ferruginous; no wonder Perugino's foregrounds, even, swam in a medium of "*oro potabile*." Outside the Bersaglieri gate there are bastions again and heavily buttressed wall, and a few hundred feet to eastward the road turns sharply and runs between olive-covered slopes down to the little booth-lined street that leads to the votive church of Madonna di Monte Luce with its rough but effective façade, its pretty courtyard, and its befrescoed interior. Once there you turn your face towards Perugia; it is superb, and seen thus from the eastward at its maximum of length, the outlying quarters push so far along the hills that it looks a town of seventy-five thousand inhabitants.

San Pietro lies far away to the southeast, then

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comes the skeleton San Domenico; the Gran Piazza rises like a bluff to the right, and is continued by the spine of the city till another quarter drops sheerly down from the Piazza delle Prone with Santa Maria Nuova rising on its slope, the piazza upheld by huge arches which change gradually into the straight courses of grand Etrurian blocks, till they turn an angle and pass out of sight toward the Augustan gate, emerging again directly under the apse of Sant' Agostino, and following the precipice always till the pyramidal top of Sant' Angelo is followed by the mass of the Angel gate, which ends Perugia at the northeast.

We went home from Monte Luce by the broad, well-made road under the eastern wall, with a changing succession of views to left and right. Now and then a man or woman, stopping for a while, chatted with some friend framed in a window far up the rock side, chatted in the clear, musical Perugian that is so easy to understand after the Florentine patois; for when Dante there in Porta Sole by San Severo sang of the Umbrian country or when he spoke in San Gimignano he left his language rather with Perugia and Siena than in his own Mercato Vecchio.

Among these views from below the walls one of the most striking is the sight of what we must call the prow of Perugia, a great bastion towering above

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one, pushing magnificently into the southern valley straight toward Rome, sharp almost as a blade, and looking like the beak of a leviathan galley, lying on the heights and waiting to be launched upon the sea of vapor that so often swims beneath.

Upon shoulders, spine, and haunches, the Griffin bears its greatest treasures: the Sala del Cambio; the Public Palace; the Fountain; the Augustan gate; there, too, are Bishopric and Cathedral, and the Palace of the Captain of the People. For a few hundred feet the monster presents a nearly level backbone which has been christened the Corso Vanucci; at the head of it are the Prefecture, Brufani, and a second hotel in an old palace and belonging also to Brufani; a very short train of bright, little shops under ancient houses follows, then the Cambio, the Public Palace, and the great Square.

All else of Perugia, save the parallel street of Sopra Mura, its hospital and palace of the People's Captain, is up hill or down dale; even the Sopra Mura (on the walls) is, as its name indicates, built on arches, else it would sink into the valley.

The Gran Piazza is one of those strange, irregular and picturesque places so frequently found at the heart of Italian towns. The Palazzo Pubblico is so fine that it would be in the very front rank of town-halls, were it not that Italy holds such surpassing examples as the Vecchio of Florence, the Mangia

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of Siena, the Ducale of Venice, in that same front rank. The great stairway and platform on the northwestern side, absent when we first saw the building, have been restored, adding much to the general effect and the only details upon the palace front which jar a little are the lombard-looking gables or string courses above the upper windows. In all the vast Noah's Ark of heraldic beasts there are few brutes more deserving of prizes than are the Griffin of Perugia, and the Lion of the Guelphic people, which are bracketed high above the doorway. They are superb in their style, in their lank ferocity and savage alertness; one looks up at their green bronze and hears the clank of armor, smells smoke, sees tumbling palaces, and listens to the axe-strokes falling on the chains at city gates. Chains of cities' gates, of Assisi and Perugia, they guarded indeed until in 1796 the French Republicans did a bit of work in the interest of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity by quietly stealing them in the night, and removing at once an opportunity for Perugian jeering and Assisan chafing. The fine fountain, the boast of all Perugians, and standing between the Palazzo Pubblico and the Cathedral, unites famous names; for Fra Bevignate called Arnolfo di Lapo and the Pisani to help him with the sculpture; it is most interesting in detail, but would be finer, it seemed to us, as a great double well-curb without the upper



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cup and bronze nereids at the top, which, though good in themselves, compose ill with the rest and give a somewhat trivial character to the general form. The cathedral is as hideous as if the blood which had stained it had blighted it; without, the golden color of its naked brick saves it from absolute ugliness, but within it is structurally bad; the octagonal piers rise nearly to the top of the church before the arches spring; the clerestory is just under the roof; the whole interior is tawdry with new, gay colors in vile patterns. Even the bells have learned their lesson of the tocsin: how can such ring glad messages? We thought that we loved all bells, but when these rang a peal for the festival of Saint Herculanius, they clanged murder, and sack, and fire, in a wild hammering minor, which, after the grand brazen voices of Florence, seemed the very tongue of discord. It was no fancy founded on Matarazzo's blood-dripping chronicle that made us hear them thus, but a very real quality in the bells. If they sounded so in the fifteenth century, one may not wonder at Bonfigli's and Caporali's angels with faces as awry as their tones, and it is well that the chimes, (save the mark)! are rung rarely to-day.

After all, how could the bells know better in Perugia? The people were traditionally Guelphic from all time, liegemen to the Pope, but in reality

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they cuffed and thwacked their suzerain in the person of his legates, and their nobles seem to have held the people's house more in awe than that of Saint Lawrence, for they treated the Palazzo Pubblico with relative respect, and placed their archers and even their artillery in and on the cathedral. Not even Siena rent and tore herself as did Perugia: one reads of it all with bewilderment; Baglioni fighting Oddi till the latter were exterminated, then fighting among themselves, till in the late years of the *quattrocento*, the early years of the *cinquecento*, they battled so constantly that one wonders how Perugino managed to reach his daily work upon the square, that centre of disturbance. We read of fighting all around the palace; of priors asked to be intercessors and prudently barricading themselves instead; nay, dropping large stones from the windows upon those who asked their interference. Matarazzo has written with intensest earnestness of the Baglioni, the "dragon's brood," fierce, beautiful, going to their graves young, blood-stained all, and often with kinsmen's, even brother's, blood; bearing strange names: Ascanius, Troilus Baglioni, Wrong-Head Baglioni, Little Dragon Baglioni. Burckhardt discovered them in Matarazzo, and Symonds has told their story so admirably that it would be superfluous to repeat it.

Within the Palazzo Pubblico on the first floor,



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the huge hall called *Sala dei Notari* has a beamed, wooden ceiling supported by eight great arches: along three sides run double ranges of backless seats, very effective in their simplicity. The restored frescoes are curious with fourteenth-century cavaliers and ladies, beasts, men and women delving and spinning, and rows upon rows of tourney helmets and escutcheons; the prevailing color is red with a good deal of the mediæval blue; the decoration, typically Tuscan, presents a most striking ensemble, the room ranking with great halls in the Palazzi of Siena and Pistoja, and somewhat recalling the Ragione of Padua. In the second story is the Pinacoteca, "very important, especially for the study of the Perugian school;" but such galleries, to us at least, are most important as showing how immeasurably superior were Florence, Venice, Rome, Parma, and Milan, the real centres, to the provincial towns.

Where the galleries of other cities count their masterpieces by dozens, Perugia has not one example of the first order, unless the visitor should insist upon a lunette by Perugino, which will rank with his good but not with his best works. Most of Pietro's pictures here belong to his sickly-sweet category; his great works remain below in the Sala del Cambio, though one or two dark-haired Maries in his early manner are earnest and suave.

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Domenico Alfani, an eclectic who sank all his personality in that of others, has a picture done from designs by Raphael. Here a new presence is felt; the color is black, but in Madonna's movement and in the strong, young body of the Christ-child, naïf fervor and delicate grace are replaced by a large freedom and a long, undulatory yet simple arrangement of lines. The other local artists are inferior to their Tuscan contemporaries; the *custode* expends many *bellissimi* on the large tabernacle of Pinturicchio, but it is rather dry and hard; the artist was far more at home upon a great wall surface. The Mannis are better, and are good and delicate reminders of his master Perugino. Bonfigli and Caporali possess a strange attraction. The angels of the former have Botticelli's mannerism in an exaggerated form, without Botticelli's science or fancy or witchery. The type is a curious one; you may see ragged children in London, pale, with glassy-blue eyes, prominent teeth, faded yellow hair, yet with a certain pathetic, stunted promise of beauty, who if crowned with cabbage-roses, worn escoffion-fashion, covered with great jewels and fitted with wings, might, if slightly dislocated and put out of drawing, become Bonfigli angels.

There is no doubt about the decorative quality of many of these pictures: they are always enter-

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taining to an unusual degree by their quaint material, and often by their subjects, as in the frescoed history of Sant' Ercolano, and there are gonfalons too in goodly number, for the Umbrians were great banner painters and equalled the Sienese in the generosity which showered pearls and jewelled raiment upon their sacred personages. There is a mine of wealth for the costume-lover in eight works of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, real manuscript-miniatures, which by a whim of the artist have grown into panel-pictures. Here are Baglioni and Oddi and La Staffa, rehearsing, one would say, for some Perugian festival and greatly to their own amusement, the miracles of San Bernardino. They are warrior-dandies, real glasses of fashion. The architecture is of the full Renaissance, very white and forthputting, somewhat overpowering the figures, but the latter are the creations of some yet gothic man-milliner; the hair curls like gold wire and rises in elaborate superimposed ranges of separate locks, the caps perch on one side, hip-pieces protrude, and the sleeves stand up as stiffly as steel brassards. Yet they are captivating, these panels, and more original than the master's large altar-pieces in the next hall.

At least this collection of the Pinacoteca has the true local flavor, almost unaffected by anything extraneous; there is nothing that jars; one has not

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constantly to readjust one's self as among the mixed if splendid masterpieces of the *Salon Carré* in the Louvre; this is not only Umbria, but that part of Umbria which turns its face resolutely away from Tuscany and is unaffected by its great Borderers Signorelli and Piero della Francesca; there is sweetness, daintiness, sometimes intensity, and always homogeneity here. Any one of these pictures placed by itself in a house in a rather dark room would be a joy forever as a decorative object; taken in the mass as the material of a great gallery they would soon prove wearisome.

## II

ADJOINING the Palazzo Pubblico is the Merchants' Exchange containing its famous frescoes.

Perugino began this cycle in 1499, and seems to have finished it in 1500, though he was not entirely paid till 1507. The Sala del Cambio shows us exactly what the men of the fifteenth century asked and obtained as a complete system of decoration, carried out at one time and under the direction of one mind. As such alone it would be a priceless lesson, but the coincidence of the decoration with one of the best periods of the Renaissance and of the direction with one of its best masters adds such intrinsic value that the little Perugian Exchange deserves to rank among the treasuries of European art. Upon entering it the first impression is one of homogeneousness and completeness. Nothing has been taken away and little added since the first years of the sixteenth century, a time at once of culmination and of transition. In the Sala del Cambio the frame equals the picture, or rather there is no distinction between the two; the whole hall is the frame; the golden brown of the inlaid benches, the cool gray lights and strong shadows

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INTERIOR OF THE SALA DEL CAMBIO













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of the carved wood continue and relieve the warm grays, the amber, and the tawny reds and yellows of the frescoes ; the pavement is in harmony below, and the vaulting above is covered with that combination of flat-painted figures and scroll-work which is so distinctive of a good art epoch, and is much more truly decorative than are the heavily carved ceilings that prevailed a half-century later. Not one of the frescoes of the Cambio equals the "Crucifixion" of S. Maddalena de' Pazzi, or the "Delivery of the Keys" in the Sistine, but each is richer in color than are the later and more famous works, while taken together the series shows us Perugino in nearly all his phases. A second impression is one of amused surprise at the frankly hybrid character of the frescoes, the result of a mediæval hospitality afforded to a classical new-comer, who could only be an interloper in Umbria. Even here, in the stronghold of pietism, the humanist had come, and had prescribed to Perugino his list of antique virtues and antique prototypes. We may still read the Latin legends of the walls repeated in the manuscript of Francesco Maturanzio.

The artist accepted both the scholarly sponsor and his prescription, and has painted in two panels sages and heroes of Rome and Greece standing all arow and labelled carefully. There has never been

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a more strangely incongruous meeting than this of Perugino and Plutarch. Do we see here a Bible interleaved with Ariosto, or have we private theatricals in a convent,—“a mystery” or rather a “morality” play? Pietro, seeking Cincinnatus at the plough, has found a pretty peasant girl instead. Scipio Africanus is a burgess’s daughter; she is comely, dull, but rather anxious. Leonidas is a good old maid with a nut-cracker chin and a rickety forehead. Licinius will pass fairly well for a man, and in the other fresco of the “Virtues” the heads are all much finer, Numa, Camillus, and Trajan being thoughtful and dignified and wearing long draperies which support them better—that is to say, give more *base* to the decoration—than do the spindle legs of Leonidas and his companions—legs made to appear more weedy because Perugino, understanding the spreading character of the steel shoulder-pieces, has bestowed on each hero (!) a broad robust thorax, and in addition compelled him to wear a helmet with a termination like a chandelier. The artist has not troubled himself to compose his figures, but has simply stood them up side by side, and he is right. Nothing is more decorative than formal pattern, and Pietro’s wall-pieces with their depth of landscape background required just such vertical foreground figures to hold them up.

For this reason the “Nativity” and “Transfigu-



PERUGIA

SALA DEL CAMBIO

PERUGINO

HEAD OF PUBLIUS SCIPIO (FRAGMENT)



THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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ration," more congenial as subjects to Perugino, are not quite as decorative as the "Virtues" though they are very nearly so, since in the first, the artist has found his upward-tending lines in his architecture, in the second in his *mandorla*. The fresco of the Sibyls and Prophets has always puzzled us. It is more massed as to color, less open than most of Pietro's work; it is all immensely like Perugino, and at the same time so different from him as to astonish. The treatment is freer and larger than his, the heads are different in expression and character, prouder, graver, more thoughtful, less intense, especially in the Solomon and the Cumæan and Libyan Sibyls. The Tiburtine unfortunately has been spoiled by restoration.

Perugino had assistance with his Cambio frescoes, but what other hand than his, if any, has so altered the character of the Sibyls and Prophets that in spite of himself, Pietro has drawn a step or two nearer to the threshold of that change of things which was coming already in Orvieto, and came in its strength ten years later. The painting of the vaulting shows Pietro's supervision, but was probably executed by assistants; it is architectonically admirable in its graduated importance, its relation to the painting of the walls. Art in central Italy is here still at the point where a room is given a vaulted ceiling suited for receiving a decoration

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distinctly subsidiary to that of the wall panels, and this decoration of the Cambio vaulting is lovely. Perugino's gods have come down from their robust Olympus and have grown slim, and mild, and languid in the air of Valdarno. Zeus wears the curled-rimmed hat so dear to Pietro's people, and takes the cup (it is Montepulciano surely) from page Gany-mede, whom the eagle stole beyond doubt from the quarter of the esquires in some Malatestian or Montefeltrine castle while Mercury, Venus, Apollo drive up to take their places in some Perugian street procession of mincing deities. About them are wreathed the little decorative figures; they are an important contingent to the art-army, skirmishers upon the edges of the main movement of the action, a pygmy population that has marched down from antiquity and passing through the alembic of the Renaissance, attains by this El Dorado a second immortality of youth. They have formed an alliance with the fauna and flora of a whole conventional world; they dive into trumpet-flowers, they balance upon curving stalks, they emerge from acanthus leaves and clasp together the delicately curling tendrils; they are the "little people" who live in the scroll-work, whether of bronze or marble, fresco or carven panel. If the decorations of Perugino please here by their detail, they may more lastingly and legitimately please by

PERUGIA

SALA DEL CAMBIO

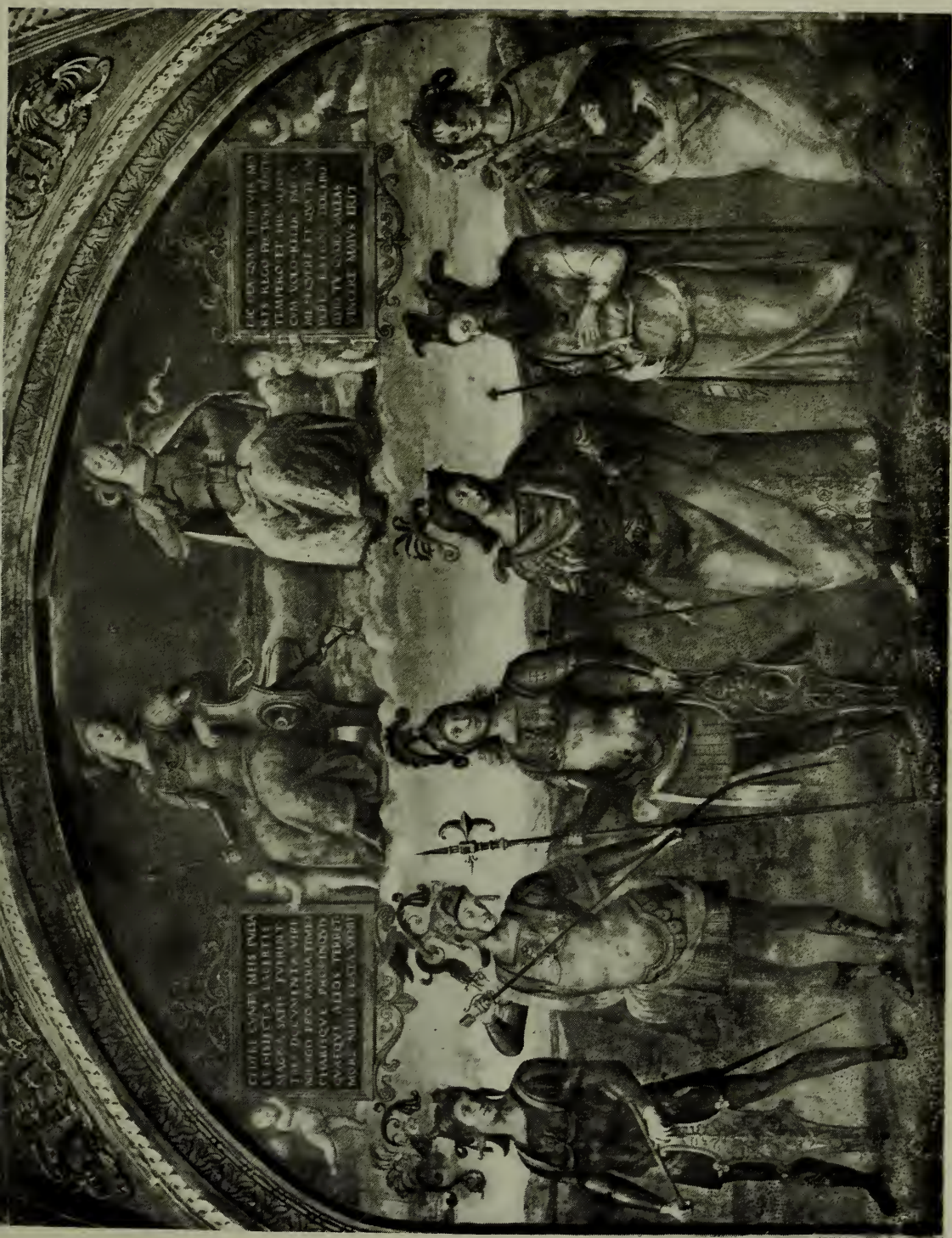
PERUGINO

TEMPERANCE AND FORTITUDE











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their homogeneity, and for all its dusky richness, the Sala del Cambio teaches, first of all and most of all, a lesson important indeed to the decorator of whatever epoch, — the lesson of restraint.

Few Italian masters are more universally known than Pietro Vanucci, the Perugian, and yet among lovers of Italian art, he is not always rated highly, even by the least critical of artistic appraisers. The stereotyped character of much of Pietro's work, and a kind of mawkish sentimentality not unoften found in it lessen its value and qualify our admiration. The direct reason for this repetition and insipidity was Perugino's popularity during his life time. This popularity was prodigious, and Pietro, great artist as he was, was not great enough to resist the evil effect of the universal demand for his pictures. Perhaps in all Italy, only Michelangelo's, Raphael's, and Titian's works were so sought after in their own day as were Perugino's in his time. Michelangelo disdained to be commercial. Raphael was filled rather with the desire to create than with the wish to acquire fortune. Titian was often frankly interested, but so superlatively gifted that all that he did partook in some degree of his greatness. Theirs in fact was fame, rather than popularity. Perugino deserved both, as we shall find on studying him critically, and he had the former in some measure, the latter in such a flood that it diluted



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his average, so that when every convent wished his work, and the supply of earnest pictures, pictures into which he had put his best capacity, could not equal the demand, he, as it were, watered his talent to increase the volume of his work, and put more sugar into it to take the place of hard study of expression.

This popularity was probably one reason, also, that Pietro's early pictures were among his best; his saints smiling sweetly, musing sweetly, grieving sweetly, were in the beginning serious and sincere for all their sweetness, often gravely sweet, sometimes sweetly ardent. They were the very things that the friars and nuns, the nuns above all, wanted. The people too, of Perugia, who had seen often and again in their battle-filled streets, beauty distorted by fury and grimace upon the faces of their fighting young Baglioni nobles; beauty lying dead and bloody; where in one day twenty-seven youths of that noble house lay stretched upon their cathedral square; these people once within their oratories wanted the mildest of faces on their triptychs, and Perugino, where it was so desired, could paint even a militant hero that should roar you as gently as a sucking dove. What wonder that first Umbria, then all Italy, and lastly transalpine states desired his pictures.

Vasari says that his enormous reduplication of

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bottega-work, his feverish love of incessant labor was caused by his memory of early poverty, his fear of future need. It is much more likely that he simply made hay when the sun shone. Filippo Lippi was probably poorer than Pietro had been. Many another artist is likely to have been quite as timid and forecasting as he, but Perugino had the greater success. He could sell a great many more pictures than his fellows, he proposed to furnish them, and, he therefore established a picture-factory in the Via Deliziosa.

The man who is an artist straight through his being can never become wholly mercenary. The wonder and the pity is, that Perugino gave way so much to commerciality, but Pietro is of all painters the most anomalous, far more so than Andrea del Sarto, whose moral excellence has been so disputed, for if in much of Andrea's work there seems to be something lacking, something that keeps it from reaching the highest point the artist was capable of attaining, we cannot quite put our finger upon that something, whereas Perugino's shortcoming is as plain to see as a church by daylight; he deliberately repeated worn-out motives, and allowed inferior work to go upon the market. This anomalousness is puzzling enough, but we are disposed to-day to give him, in the light of certain modern documents, the benefit of a somewhat wider charity than Vasari accorded,

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for the Aretine represents him not only avaricious, but atheistic, "his porphyry-hard brain" impervious to all religious influence. Many modern writers, have, as often elsewhere, accepted Vasari's verdict without question, but whatever the general critic may imply by "irreligious," Perugino must have been as a painter at once reverent and sincere during a long period of his life, for his work proves this unmistakably. He was certainly an interesting psychological problem, a protagonist of pietistic art, and yet taxed as an infidel; a man capable of the most dignified and monumental compositions, yet willing to repeat himself and to coin money by the use of worn-out material. His surroundings were as incongruous as the qualities found in his work and attributed to his character, since Perugia was at once the home of religious painting and the closed lists of the most ruffianly nobles in Italy, the Baglioni. Taine is inclined to place Perugino among those who were changed and made sceptical by the apparent failure of Savonarola's prophecies. On his portrait of Francesco delle Opere is inscribed *Timete Deum*, and after all is said neither avarice nor repetition of motives in his pictures proves irreligion in Perugino, and as to his infidelity we have only Vasari's assertion, based doubtless on some such local tradition as Pietro's burial under the oak of Fontignano. Other stories, and even documents



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tend to absolve him, and the causes of Perugino's artistic decline may probably as we shall see later, be found in the conditions which governed the evolution of Italian painting.

Among the instances which go far toward disproving the stories of Perugino's avarice and irreligion, is that of his ceding to Santa Maria de' Bianchi, at Castello della Pieve, a picture at one-third the original price. Again, he painted a Saint Sebastian for the church of Panicale; he asked but a very small sum for the picture, and two years later, having lent fourteen painted banners to the same village, he added to the loan the condition that in case the villagers did not care to return him the banners they were to pay the remainder of the sum due on the Saint Sebastian. In a word, it was a way of presenting the banners to Panicale. On the other hand, Pietro sometimes undertook to drive a hard bargain even with the wardens of a cathedral, as at Orvieto, and in Venice he demanded for frescoes to be done in the Ducal Palace more than double what afterward satisfied Titian, who eventually did the work.

This bit of haggling was, however, but the practice of a keen hand who believed in himself, who had work and to spare at home, whose reputation, in his own belief at least, could be best served by painting done in Tuscany or Umbria, and who if he

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was to suffer from the long absence and to incur the laborious, costly and even dangerous journey to Venice, must be well paid for it. The more we consider conditions, the less difficult it grows to free Perugino from the charges of irreligion and avarice. From the readiness to sacrifice to the mercantile spirit, the easy willingness to furnish poor wares to customers who in turn were willing to accept them, we cannot free him. But we have said that the true artist can never be wholly commercial, and Perugino was, in some respects, as true an artist as ever lived; therefore he had to find a mode of expression for the best that was in him. He found it now and again in such pictures as the beautiful triptych of Pavia, but it is probable that he felt that he best atoned for a mercenary spirit and most satisfied his artistic consciousness when he was engaged upon those great works for corporations and cities and popes, his monumental frescoes.

Until within the last twenty-five years the histories of Italian art have, as it were, wreaked themselves upon easel pictures, and yet the true glory of the Italians has been in nearly every case their mural paintings. No artist has suffered more misapprehension by this separation of easel painting from monumental work than has Perugino. He was one of the first to successfully handle the new medium of oil. The depth and transparency, as

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well as the novelty of the latter, combined with the painter's own personal and temperamental contribution to make his work popular, and the facility attainable in oil resulted in an enormous multiplication of his pictures. This reduplication has hurt our estimate of Perugino in two ways ; first, because among so many works relatively few are of the first order ; secondly, because their great number has caused their author to be regarded almost wholly as a painter of small panels or canvases, whereas only a few of his easel pictures deserve comparison with his works in fresco, and even when we examine the most beautiful of his panels, such as those of the triptych of Pavia, we must admit that their qualities are repeated upon a grander scale on the walls of the Sistine Chapel and of the Maddalena de' Pazzi chapter-house. Nevertheless, both as painter of frescoes and of panels, his technical capacity was of a high order. His art was first and last the child of the Umbrian landscape, the landscape with the low horizon line as seen from some hill town with its tremendous sweep of sky. It is the sense of serene, far-reaching space framing his figures that charms us most of all in his work. As a colorist Perugino was a typical Umbrian ; his color was warm, transparent, golden ; Leonardo's was more delicate, and of the latter's magical *chiaroscuro* Perugino had no knowledge, indeed he never

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even gave a thought to it, but Leonardo's very seeking after that same light and shadow turned his color to blackness, while Perugino's remained transparent and admirably fitted to his purpose of expression. In this last quality of expression he was past-master, but although it made him for a while the most popular painter in Italy, and reached great heights of fervor and pathos, it descended also to affectation and even to mawkishness. As a draughtsman he was elegant but rarely forceful, and sometimes feeble; his compositions when at their best were full of dignity, but more often they were conventional and thin, being lacking in a feeling for the disposition of mass, while, on the other hand, they were always restrained and never overcrowded. Perugino, like Filippino Lippi, did his finest work in the earlier part of his career; but he did not, like Filippino, gradually exchange the sympathetic quality in his painting for the research and striving of a pioneer. On the contrary, he sank to an uniformity of execution which, if often sweet, was often spiritless, and does not always merit our respect. Outraged critics, and among them Vasari, — as we have already seen — have sought for a direct reason for this, and have cried avarice and irreligion. This accusation does not seem wholly reasonable. In a man with the fear of hell before his eyes, avarice might be compatible with the painting of pictures

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for religious confraternities for little or no pay, but it could not be so with an irreligious man. Either Perugino may have been avaricious and fearful of the future, or he may have been irreligious and recklessly generous with monks and churches. The former condition of things would clear his reputation for orthodoxy, the latter condition does not seem likely, outside of a comic opera at least, and Perugino's artistic decline in middle life is much more probably the result of external than of internal causes. In his earlier years the mastery of the oil medium, which he achieved sooner than other men, and the intrinsic charm of his work, made him one of the most popular masters not merely in Italy but in Europe. Later, after he had formed his style, there came upon all the schools of Italy a complete change of manner; the gentle and amiable spirit of Raphael still found something to admire in the work of such painters as Perugino and Francia, but Michelangelo and the men of the new school fiercely contemned it. Signorelli retired to the provincial patronage of his native Umbria. Vasari tells us that Botticelli was poor and needy, and therein probably exaggerates his neglect at the hands of newcomers and workers in new ways. It is quite possible that Perugino, finding his pictures despised by the famous artists and eagerly sought for by laymen, gave up striving and became the commer-



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cial painter which we know him to have been in later years, and that, without more of avarice or of irreligion than were to be found in his fellows. The fact remains that the earlier works of Perugino are his best, and that multiplication of his pictures has hurt his reputation because the tendency is to judge him by his average, that is to say, when the art lover thinks of Perugino a number of inferior works crowd into his mind; but if he will go through a mental process of elimination and recall the Delivery of the Keys in the Sistine, the Crucifixion in S. Maddalena de' Pazzi, the cycle of the Cambio at Perugia, as the representation of the painter as *frescante*, then will remember the two wonderful profile heads of monks in the Florentine Academy, and consider what Pietro could do as portraitist when he chose to take the time for such work; lastly, if he will review the best panel pictures, the triptych of Pavia, the Vision of St. Bernard, an Enthroned Madonna at Bologna, and not a few others, the student will assuredly give to this master one of the highest places in the secondary group, and will admit that the man who in *quattrocento* composition could in his Delivery of the Keys say the last word before the new order of things came in with the Stanze of the Vatican, and who could in his Pazzi Crucifixion exhibit a new feeling for landscape, was worthy to become the master of Raphael.



### III

To hazard a guess why the violent and sanguinary Perugians so loved the decorous pieties of Perugino is to play with an old puzzle. Many notables have fitted the pieces together more or less well, but the problem still allures us, as it has all restless folk given to questioning and prying when they should be looking and enjoying.

Why does your kitchen maid prefer to read (if she reads anything beside the "Fashionable intelligence" and "Society items" in the newspapers) novels about lords and ladies, instead of realistic fiction? Why does a cultured and sophisticated taste delight in primitive art? Why does our sedentary civilization find pleasure in tales of adventure?

Is it not because Lady Arabella's coqueties and Melozzo's angels, and Chicot's sword-play represent the unusual, the unhackneyed, something remote from the humdrum experiences of daily life?

To Perugia, torn and scarred with incessant conflict, strife was a commonplace and tranquil contemplation the exception. Her piety was as hysterical as were her excesses of martial ardor. Repentance

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pushed to a certain extreme becomes a loose self-indulgence hardly less sensual than the sins which it would expiate. Temperance was never an Umbrian virtue. Massacre yesterday and a procession of flagellants to-day; scarce-dried blood puddling the pavement and a gory rain in the air from the scourge-strokes on bare shoulders — that was Perugia's way of establishing spiritual equilibrium. The town of the Griffin was always athirst either for the sacramental wine or the blood of its own brawling citizens. Men turned from the tumults and the excitement of expiatory ceremonies to the serene twilight and restrained harmonies of Perugino's pictures as to a foretaste of heaven. To penitents faint with the exhaustion which follows intense nervous exaltation; to the still panting swash-buckler who knelt with dripping sword before the triptych, how potent must have been the appeal of these rapt Madonnas, these dreaming saints.

How irresistible to the Perugian, suffering from a hypertrophy of passions, unrestrained by inward counsellor or public opinion, to this feryid, tensely strung human creature, was the celestial nirvana of Vanucci's pictures. In the dim twilight of the churches they rose like visions above the mad crowd, who sobbed before them or who in ecstasies of repentance fell on the necks of the foes whom they would presently fall upon with the sword.

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To comprehend the Umbrian's point of view we must remember that his was not that morality touched with emotion, the ethical philosophizing Christianity of to-day. Since the preaching of Saint Francis, religion to the Umbrians of the nobler sort, had meant love and aspiration. In their piety there was little preoccupation with moral questions, and a bewildering lack of the Teutonic sense of duty. The wholesome, Latin sanity of Florence was wanting in this ferocious and hallucinated Umbria. A Methodist revival *en permanence* was the ideal of the religious life among these rather murderous mystics. There was no attempt to rationalize belief; to connect it with daily duties; to make it one of the "offices of life;" Umbria ignored the Platonism which hellenizing Florence read into her religion. Chastity, self-sacrifice, loving-kindness, were virtues for the professionally devout to practise; your active fighting layman revered them, contributed handsomely to the exercise of them by others, but they were not for him. "I feel, therefore I am," would have been a Perugian's rendering of the Cartesian dictum. "*In fuoco Amor mi mise*," he could sing with conviction, but that divine love could influence conduct and become a factor in his daily life, was quite foreign to his conception of spiritual influences.

Emotion pure and simple is not intrinsically holy

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or noble; *per se* it possesses no moral value. This gashed and battered Perugia is a pathetic example of the hysterical going-to-pieces of a community governed by feeling. Gentle Suor Brigida and San Bernardino found a city at the mercy of its sensations, and for a little time directed these sensations into noble channels; then came the turn of Braccio di Montone or of Gianpaolo Baglioni to sway their impressionable townsfolk, and the Seven Deadly Sins were loosed again.

Prosaic common-sense was the antiseptic which preserved Florence in spite of her occasional outbreaks of emotion. The democratic spirit enabled Siena, if not to live honorably, at least to die heroically. Perugia was without a balance-wheel. The distraught city was like those souls which Virgil saw "*suspensae ad ventos*," tossed on the whirlwind of desire. Did ever a town bear more plainly upon its face the record of its past misdeeds? It is a natural fortress. Here are twisting streets burrowing under the houses, where a stout chain could check an army; narrow passages between bristling walls, where a single knight, like Astorre Baglioni, might again hold the Oddi at bay. There are abrupt turns in the alleys where an assassin might crouch for a spring, and covered passages where conspirators should wait in darkness for a signal. The whole town cries slaughter and havoc.

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The town, yes — but there is the country which sweeps up to the foot of the crag-like bastions, and which is always seen from every coign of vantage in this rocky eyrie. This is the landscape which we see between the adoring or ecstatic saints of Perugino; this is the *patria* of Saint Francis, austere and tender as the *genius loci*. Inexpressibly beautiful as it always is, we love it best in the early spring, when it wears its sober winter tint of russet brown, as though the mantle of Saint Francis still lay upon it. Then the mountains, rising in noble lines, chain behind chain until the farthest peaks melt into the clouds, have hidden their purple under snowy copes. Over the vivid patches of young wheat the olives cast their shadows like faint trails of incense. Sheltered clefts in the hillside are purpled with violets and anemones, and, like the blossoming rod of Saint Joseph, the bare branches of the almond-tree bend under their weight of rosy snow. The sun struggling through vapor, shines, a pale halo over this land of saints, and a light wind rises driving the mist before it, tearing it into long transparent veils fit for Madonna's wear. A storm here with this vast expanse of sky, these solemn mountains and the boundless sweep of the wind is apocalyptic in its grandeur. The huge sheets of mist hurry along the valley from Umbria to Tuscany, or are borne on the hurricane that flies shrieking through



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the mountain passes to Ancona and the sea. By and by the vapors rise directly from the plain as if Tiber and Arno were Phlegethon and Cocytus amid the smoke of many miles of burning land until the mist rolls into clouds, and castle after castle, town after town comes into view. When Raphael painted in the Loggie of the Vatican, God the Father separating land from water, darkness from light, he may have remembered these tremendous elemental scene-shiftings that pass before the terraces of Perugia.

The Umbrian towns sit upon thrones, but the throne of Perugia is grandest of them all, rising above a sea of olives and vines, where shining spots in the landscape are historic cities, and the glistening ribbon that bends three times eastward and westward along the southern plain is Tiber, winding down to Rome. Besides possessing this lofty and dreamy beauty of the landscape, the country teems with suggestions and associations. Every mile of it is celebrated in histories of battle or legends of saints. Over these hills Romans and Carthaginians have marched and countermarched and fought. The hill to the right hides "reedy Thrasymane" and Sanguinetto, which once ran red. Far to the south on clear days a white point shows Spoleto, where an arch in the city wall tells us that "From this gate Hannibal was repulsed by the townspeople."



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Through the two thousand years which have followed, these same towns have fought perennially, beating off Latins, Romans, Carthaginians, Pope, and Cæsar, and in later times when their own walls were safe, these Umbrians, always on their knees or in the saddle, have waged other people's battles for hire and earned their living by "changing blows." In this fierce and devout Umbria, there were always saints to redeem the sinners and if men were too often wolves, wolves sometimes became holy; not far behind the hills to the northeast is Gubbio, where a wolf wore a halo, and Assisi is close at hand, where lived the Saint who made beasts human and men divine.

Where life has gone on for so many years, time has been found for many things, and the brush has been as active as the sword. It is a painter's land; under the roofs of little Spello, Pinturicchio has left his frescoes; Foligno on the plain once held the Madonna now in the Vatican; the blue and gold of Lippo are mouldering away in the apsis of Spoleto, and yonder in Assisi you may read the gospel of Saint Francis according to Cimabue and Giotto.

There is such a superposition of history and art that memories crowd on the heels of memories; one would hardly dare to say how far the inward or the outward vision can extend, and grander than the historic association or any suggestion of human per-

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sonality, is the large elemental sense that is upon it all, of earth and sky and wind and sun.

Surely the evil that men do does not live long after them, and the good is not so oft interred with their bones; the treachery and bloodshed, even the horrors of the last massacre have faded away like the bloodstains on the stone, leaving only memories which vivify the crumbling town, but the peace which Catherine and Francis and Bernardino preached and Perugino painted, has remained.

CORTONA, — THE DAUGHTERS OF  
SANTA MARGHERITA



## CORTONA,—THE DAUGHTERS OF SANTA MARGHERITA

PERUGINO was above all a painter for nuns. The suavity and tenderness of his types, the tranquillity of his compositions, a certain decorum and measure which he always observed, commended his pictures to the religious orders. No painter was more popular within convent walls, and no painter has rendered with more charm the ideal of the cloister. Contemplation, absorption in the thought of God, devout meditation on the divine mysteries, detachment from the interests of real life, find plastic exponents in Perugino's figures. His placid, dove-like old men dreaming in the Umbrian sunshine; his reserved and serious adolescents; his ministering angels, so young, so zealous in their service and yet so solemn; his pensive virgins, lost in blissful adoration of the Christ-child, but always serene and noble,—show a chastened restraint, a disciplined fervor which is of the cloister. The wide horizons behind these figures, the clear space of sky between the slender columns from which the silence of the fields, the quiet of evening seem to enter the picture, add to the impression of subdued emotion.

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We do not find in Perugino the pious transports of Jacopone da Todi nor the ecstatic devotion of Saint Francis; it is the peace of God rather than the divine love which the painter translated into form. Perugino's people are calm; they enjoy the serene beatitude of renunciation. They have ceased to struggle and suffer; nay, they have never struggled or suffered. They do not think; mental travail has never knit their smooth brows. An indwelling vision holds them entranced while it nowise impairs the bloom of their tranquil beauty. Italian piety was occasionally ascetic, Italian art never was. Indeed there is no such thing as ascetic art, for when the ascetic spirit is in the ascendant, art ceases to exist, and when originally ascetic ideas are translated into artistic *media* they lose their asceticism in the process.

Perugino, like all Italians, had sacrificed to the Pagan gods. In their service he had learned to seek for beauty and serenity. In Italy Divinity has never ceased to be human, and things divine are so firmly rooted in the kindly, brown soil that they always retain something of Mother Earth. It is trite indeed to insist on the advantages which the arts have enjoyed from this attitude towards the spiritual. That the imagination which finds its sphere of action in the plastic arts can never spurn the earth, but must be tethered to the concrete,



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is a well-worn platitude because it is eternally true.

These wistful rather weedy youths of Perugino, these pensive Sibyls and yearning Saints, in spite of their seraphic languor, are comely, robust, young creatures, in whom the life currents move gently and evenly. Theirs is an eternal youth of the soul; doubt has never whispered in their ears, or temptation clutched them by the throat; they are unspotted by the world and unfretted by its cares. You may see their like to-day in many an Italian convent perched on the hills of Tuscany or Umbria; the same smooth, sweet faces unfurrowed by thought, the same composed, languid grace, the same expression of modesty and humility. Perugino, could he return to earth, would find his models and his patrons unchanged. Theirs is the large simplicity of the primitive man before the mind — the unquiet, tormenting, questioning mind — had been awakened in him.

It was our good fortune many years ago to visit such a convent and to meet in the flesh the Saints of Perugino. We had stopped at Cortona for the Angelicos and Signorellis, the Greek Muse and the Etruscan lamp, and were guests of mine hostess of the *Stella d' Oro*. She was no ordinary *padrona* but a girl whose vivid beauty made your heart beat, and the hearts of all the youths in the countryside

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as well. No *caffè* in the poor little town was as well patronized as ours on a market day when the young farmers of the district came in troops to absorb innumerable *bicchierini* and look into the soft, unfathomable eyes of the libation pourer. We had spent two days in Cortona and were about to start for Perugia, when pretty Matilde wheedled us into staying another half day to visit the convent of Santa Margherita, in which she had been educated. There were marvels within that convent's walls unseen by common tourists who only stayed one day in Cortona and consequently failed to fill the coffers of the *Stella d' Oro*. And the nuns! Angels on earth, who did such stupendous embroideries. And the view! Trasimeno, the mountains behind Montepulciano, it would be a sin to miss it! "But," we objected, "these are cloistered sisters and they won't admit us."

"Oh, otherwise. Indeed they will if I bring you. Besides they have never seen an American, and *monachine* are women — they are curious enough."

"But the men of our party?"

"The *maschi*?" she returned with Latin directness. "We will find a way; come, and you shall see. *Andiamo*."

Half protesting, half laughing we yielded, and climbed to the highest point of the poverty-stricken town, followed by a crowd of insistent beggars who

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commanded rather than besought our charity. On our arrival at the convent our guide rang at the grating, and a nun appeared, wide-eyed with amazement at the family group assembled before her.

"Eh! Pazza (Crazy). What is this?" she asked the intrepid Matilde, who replied in an off-hand manner as though bringing tourists to inspect the convent were an every-day occurrence.

"Dear Sister here are some Americans, Protestants; a whole family, understand; a papa, a mamma, two little girls, and two *bambini*, whom I have brought to see you! Eh! why not? *They* have never seen a convent, *you* have never seen an American family, and Protestants too. It will give pleasure to you both. Isn't it just?"

We never knew what the sister portress replied to this incontrovertible argument, for Matilde disappeared within the doorway after bidding us wait and fear nothing. We, confiding in her powers of dialectic and the desire of the good nuns to see a whole brood of heretics, young ones included, stood patiently without. There was much chattering on the other side of the wall; our advent had fluttered the dovecote; probably the papa was the stumbling-block. He was carefully inspected through the grating, and, as he possessed a snowy beard and white hair, the nuns decided that he might enter, "*perchè rassomiglia tanto a Dio Padre,*"

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they explained to us later. Thanks to his resemblance to the "*père éternel de l'école italienne*," the grating swung open before us, and we filed in past the little turnstile through the long, bare corridor into the refectory. Here we found the whole chapter assembled; girl-nuns with downy, round cheeks and big innocent eyes; older nuns with sweet patient faces, and elderly nuns, cheerful and sprightly, tenderly touched by Time, who deals so gently with those who renounce all attempts to outwit him. There was the Mother Superior, a tiny old lady who had spent forty years in the convent, a kind of fairy godmother shrivelled like a delicate autumn leaf, her brown face lighted by mouse-like eyes. There was Sister Elizabeth, "*la dotta*," the learned one, slender, graceful, with a wistful expression and delicate, worn features. Evidently she was paying the penalty of having timidly pecked at the fruit of the forbidden tree. But the rest seemed unvexed by knowledge either of the world or of books, and their innocent excitement over our arrival was uncomplicated by intellectual curiosity. They were strangely like the saints of Umbrian pictures as they stood in the clear light of the spring morning which entered unobstructed through the great windows. And what complexions! What roses of Sharon, and what lilies of the valley! Were pure water and mountain air the cause of this lovely

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coloring? Was it the result of a regular and temperate life? Or was it the reward of self-control and holy thoughts and placid resignation? Who knows?

After Matilde had presented us with that grace of manner which is the Italian's birthright, with Sister Elizabeth for *cicerone* we began a stately progress through the convent. In the refectory we had observed that the dishes on the long table dated from the middle of the last century. This phenomenon was accounted for when we learned that each sister washed her own, and was "disciplined" when she broke anything. Penances had evidently been rarely imposed for that particular misdemeanor.

Escorted by the whole company we entered the class-room, for the nuns now have charge of the communal school, a huge *sala* planned and built in the sumptuous Italian manner before the world was overcrowded and space had become a serious consideration. Here the lively little Superior, who, as soon as she found that the foreigners spoke Italian, became so animated as to be well-nigh unintelligible, requested the papa (during our entire visit he was always addressed as *il Signor Babbo*) to indicate on the school-room globe the exact spot from whence we came. Nuova York was therefore pointed out and the watery waste which we had



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traversed with "undaunted courage" made a deep impression on our auditors. "So much water! *Madonna!* In what peril you were!" chirped the little Mother, clasping her minute hands. "Elizabeth, do you understand, my daughter?"

The carnations in Elizabeth's cheeks flamed into damask roses.

"Yes, Mother, the Atlantic ocean is three thousand miles across," she said in a low voice.

The Superior turned to us radiant with triumph. "She knew it, of course she knew it, she knows everything. Is n't it true?"

An enthusiastic assent from the other sisters confirmed this declaration of "*la dotta's*" omniscience. Either Sister Elizabeth's humility shrank from this tribute or else she felt that she must justify it by further erudition. "Every Italian should know about America because an Italian discovered it and an Italian named it," she said, addressing us apologetically. We assured her, to the joyous surprise of the sisters, that we were conversant with these facts, and that the Americans had not forgotten them. Just then a very young nun with a grave, angelic face who should have been inside a picture-frame gathering flowers for a Baby Christ edged up to us and queried timidly: "But are you true Americans? We thought they were red, or black, like this one."



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She pointed to a negro's head done in wool work by some youthful Cortonese. Twenty years ago, in an Italy filled with beautiful motives for textile decoration, this design was very popular. The mortified "*dotta*" hurried to the rescue.

"We Italians are immensely ignorant," she explained, gently patting the girl nun's shoulder, "and many of us do not know that you English colonists are white, blond even like the *bambino* there, do we? Sister Filomena is so busy with her beautiful embroidery that she has no time for history, *poverina*. But you will see her work presently." The wise sister then busied herself in showing us the text-books supplied by the government for use of the scholars, but Filomena was quite unabashed. "Never did geography please me," she confessed, "nor history either, but I have a passion for calligraphy."

"Nor does it please me," added the Superior. "When I travel I learn geography, and how far it is from one town to another, and how much the ticket costs *seconda classe*, but as for far-off places which I shall never see—for them I have no memory."

Evidently to the good Mother, America was included in that *terra incognita* which in old maps is designated as "Here reigns Cimmerian darkness," or "Here are men who walk with their heads under

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their arms." Corporate pride again impelled the "*dotta*" to explain.

"Our Mother is a painter. She has made many copies in the Florentine galleries and several stupendous designs — properly the works of a master. She does not occupy herself with geography, for artists do not care for physics."

"Our Mother" protested. "Those are *roba vecchia*," done when she was young and in the world. Otherwise are pictures painted nowadays, with great brush-strokes, — and she waved an absurdly small hand, a real *manina di monaca*, in the air. She had aspirations once like another but — Well! if we would see them we must needs be indulgent to a *povera vecchia*; and with a deprecatory shrug she led the way with great alacrity to the chapel.

The *roba vecchia* proved to be careful copies in oil and crayon of well-known works in the Uffizi, patiently, sincerely, and rather tamely executed. "There were others in the work-rooms and in the nuns' cells," she admitted. So we went from one high-studded, bare, immaculate chamber to another, the sweet mountain air pouring through the open windows and ruffling the plumes of our attendant doves. Bitterly cold this great pile of stone must be in winter, but the nuns never light a fire except in the cavernous kitchen fireplace.

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We saw more copies and many embroideries and laces, for each sister, like Desdemona, seemed to be "delicate with her needle," and Italian trousseaux and layettes are made by their adroit and dainty fingers. The altruistic ostentation of the nuns was by far the prettiest thing that they showed us. "She did that!" "The Sisters Chiara and Francesca made those!" "See this lace of Sister Benedetta's. *Vedi quant' è sottile!*" Each needlewoman was praised in turn by her fellow-workers, and blushinglly disclaimed their eulogies with a scarcely audible "It's a poor little thing! *Non c' è niente davvero!*"

They presently discovered that the Signora Mamma had a headache, and then what a wealth of solicitude was lavished upon her! How soon half a hundred angelic faces looked celestial pity, and how sweetly fifty gentle voices cooed commiseration! What could they do for the *emicrania*? Salts? There were none in the convent! Succory water? That would take hours to make. What could be done? Matilde, who had been quite subdued until now, had an idea: "English people drank tea when they had headaches; it was an excellent *tisane*." Alas! the nuns had never seen or tasted it; it was evidently not considered an orthodox beverage and had a decided tang of heresy about it, to judge from their expression when it was mentioned. Besides, there was no tea in Cortona; three years before, an

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English tourist had left a little with the apothecary, but it had grown mouldy and had been "*buttato via*."

Tea being quite out of reach, the Mother, who was a woman of action, determined to try the curative properties of a native remedy. Sister Chiara was therefore presented with a huge key from a Blue-beard-like bunch which hung at the Mother's waist, and told to run to the pharmacy for the little flask of alkermes from the Certosa. Sister Chiara evidently asked nothing better than to stretch her long limbs by a run through the halls. She went and returned in a trice, speeding like a greyhound, only pausing at the door to settle her coif and fold her long sleeves over her hands before she re-entered, a model of demure maidenliness, with the precious vial.

It was evidently a rite, this opening of the alkermes. No one but the Superior would have ventured to officiate at this ceremony. "*Ci vuol pazienza*," she observed as she slowly poured drop after drop of liquid ruby into a tiny gilded glass. She needed a steady hand as well as patience, for in spite of her care the cordial overflowed the *bicchierino*. What would you? one grows old and tremulous. The *dotta*, by a pious fraud, furtively wiped up the spilt treasure with her spotless sleeve, as she handed the spicy alkermes to the Signora

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Mamma. Who could be so hard of heart as to remain uncured by the precious potion? Another pious fraud was promptly perpetrated and the sufferer declared that she was greatly relieved. The younger sisters looked on with deep interest and an expression which said plainly enough: "You are not to be pitied after all; drinking a whole glass" (it was quite as large as a thimble) "of the good Mother's cordial" and one baby-faced *sorellina*, whose *péché mignon* was evidently greediness, passed a rose-leaf tongue over her lips very much as a puppy does when he watches one at dinner.

It was during our visits to their cells that the nuns betrayed a touch of human weakness. In each small, stony chamber, in striking contrast to the austerity of the other appointments, was a blessed *bambino* most elaborately attired. No middle-class American infant dressed for "a day of pleasure" on an excursion steamer or a Sunday school picnic was ever more elaborately tucked and frilled and belaced than were these holy dolls. Dexterous and pious needles had been consecrated to their service, and individual taste had been allowed unusual latitude in their embellishment. There was evidently much rivalry of a sublimated, seraphic sort between the sisters about these *bambini*, and we were obliged to carefully measure our encomiums of them. A *Gesulino* in lace pantalettes having stimulated our



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admiration, a cherubic nun fairly dragged us in to her cell to see a *bambino* in pink kid slippers which came from Paris. A very young *bambino*, hardly out of the mewling stage, tightly bound in swaddling-clothes, aroused our curiosity, and our unguarded expressions of it enkindled such passions in gentle breasts that we were obliged to insincerely eulogize the lace bibs of several very *bourgeois* and conventional *Gesulini*. This naïve exhibition of innocent vanities lasted nearly an hour. What a wise church it was which provided this outlet for womanly coquetries! There *were* members of our family who took a deep and critical interest in doll-dressing, having studied the subject exhaustively in several European capitals, and according to these connoisseurs, the sisters' efforts had been crowned with a fair measure of success.

At the door of a cell two sisters stopped one of our party, a girl of fifteen, and with an alluring air of mystery drew her into an empty class-room, where the elder of the two seized the stranger's hands and panted tremulously: "Will you do something for me? It is my brother; I must write to him. Three years ago he went to America and we have never heard from him. My mother tells me each time that she is permitted to visit me that she has no letter. He may have received a *coltellata* (a knife-stroke) in that country, he may



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have the fever—he may be dead. We know nothing, not even how to send a letter rightly.”

“Yes, yes, I understand,” answered the American; “I am at your service. Now, *senza complimenti*, what can I do for you?”

“How much are you *gentile*!” gasped the poor little sister. “*Ecco*! I will write him a letter which you will post for me, if the address is well written, and when you go back to your country you will perhaps see him. He is in Caracas. Is that far from Nuova York?” There was no time to estimate the distance, even if the little American had been capable of the computation, so she answered vaguely that Caracas was “*lontano assai*,” but that the letter should be sent.

“It is perhaps a sin against holy obedience,” reluctantly suggested the nun.

“*Sicuro*, of course it is for you, but not for me. *You* only give me the letter, *I* post it,” cheerfully rejoined the Yankee casuist. (There are no subtler players at Loyola’s own game than the New Englanders when they choose.)

“But,” faltered the nun, with a lovely blush that was sadly wasted in a cloister, “there should be a stamp—I have no money—not a *soldo*, and we poor daughters of Saint Francis—”

“*I* have hundreds of stamps,” interrupted the foreign conspirator. “Now mind: you send the let-

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ter to Matilde at the Stella d' Oro before to-morrow morning, and I'll post it myself. *Capisce.*"

The little sister employed all the resources of a language framed for courtesy to thank the stranger for this trifling service, and ended characteristically enough with: "And I shall pray for you to the American saint, your compatriot, Santa Rosa of Lima." Then they scurried back to the doll show, hoping to avoid detection. Did they? Who knows? The letter did not come to the inn, which was a pity, for it would sometimes be reassuring to count on the intercession of Santa Rosa.

The plotters found Sister Elizabeth telling the story of Saint Margaret of Cortona. Now this particular saint had been very popular with us in our juvenile art studies in Italy. Our interest was, however, of the inferior kind now condemned as "literary," and was roused by the saint's attribute, a small dog. A relation of her life and adventures during which the presence of the dog would be accounted for had been eagerly demanded. The *dotta's* version of the story of this local Magdalen was probably arranged for the use of young persons, so we cannot vouch for its accuracy.

Santa Margherita was a beautiful girl, properly a beauty; the daughter of a rich man who lived in Alviano (here Alviano was pointed out from the hall window and inspected with a new interest).

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Her mother died when she was a *bambinella*, and her father soon brought home a stepmother who treated the little one with the usual cruelty. (The barbarity of the stepmother was accepted as a matter of course by the younger auditors. In the world of fairy tale a kind stepmother is as rare as an ugly princess.) Well, the poor Margherita was starved, and overworked, and beaten every day, and grew up to be the prettiest girl in the country. Her stepmother's hatred increased daily and finally the *poverina* could endure no more, and ran away to lead an evil life.

(The dog having as yet failed to appear, some of the audience began to show their disappointment. They were perceptibly cheered, however, by the announcement of Margherita's wickedness, depravity being generally diverting, while the little sisters whose conceptions of sin were confined to tearing a veil, or forgetting a prayer, and who had heard the story before, looked down on Thrasymene or thought on Heaven, if one could judge from their countenances). One night a *Signorone* who desperately loved her was stabbed just after he had left Margherita's house. The next day his little dog (a sigh of satisfaction from the more critical auditors) came to her whining and pulling her dress. Wondering why his master did not return with him, she finally followed the dog to the spot where her lover lay dead.

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The rest of the story was dramatically an anti-climax, and was designed "rather for edification than for delectation," to borrow a phrase of Saint Francis de Sales. The youngest of Sister Elizabeth's hearers, after we had been told of Margherita's sudden conversion, her severe penance, and her final admission into the Franciscan order, timidly inquired what became of the dog, and *la dotta* forfeited her title to universal knowledge by confessing that she did not know. Let us hope that the *cagnolino* took orders with his saint and followed her to the convent as did Chanteloup, the dog of Madame de Choiseul, when his mistress renounced the world.

It is impossible to render the dramatic quality which *la dotta's* vivid presentation gave to this simple story. Her eloquent hands, her vocal inflections, the remarkable plasticity of her facial muscles were employed to visualize for us the various characters of the tale. She was the cruel step-mother, and the injured saint, and the murdered lover, and the little dog, by turns. She forgot all about Sister Elizabeth until after the Christ of the convent crucifix had bowed its head in answer to the prayers of the saint and the story was finished. Then, in a twinkling, the mime vanished, and the nun reappeared. As she stood against the wide horizon with folded hands and shining eyes, with the warmth of enthusiasm on her face, she was more than ever

CORTONA

ANGELO AND FRANCESCO DI PIETRO D'ASSISI

SARCOPHAGUS OF SANTA MARGHERITA













## CORTONA

like one of our Perugino's fervid yet demure virgins. Behind her lay Thrasymane, like a down-tossed shield of silver, the distant mountains, aerial with mist, faintly pencilled against the light-filled sky, and in the foreground rose the slender poplars and olives showing the delicate framework of their branches under their sparse foliage, — the landscape familiar to all lovers of the Umbrian painter.

Then we said good-bye while a chorus of sweet voices recommended us, quite superfluously, not to forget Santa Margherita, and we went into the town again, softly stirred by the indefinable emotion which one feels in the presence of innocence and holiness.

The next day we journeyed to Perugia with a handsome, kindly deputy who had been with Garibaldi in all his campaigns. To him we recounted our impressions of the nuns of Santa Margherita. He received our confidences dryly enough. Nuns, oh, yes, he knew them well, with their lowered eyelids and their soft voices! They were Jesuits, all of them.

We objected that ours were not Jesuits, but Franciscans.

"Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, they were the same cattle!" He knew, and he had paid for knowing it; "they were all hypocrites!"

Poor, brave, clever deputy! We vaguely felt that he was missing something.



**SPOLETO**





## SPOLETO

WE went to Spoleto for Fra Lippo's sake, but we lingered there a while, only too short a while, for its own. The friar's fresco is in the cathedral: you cannot love it as you do his works at Prato or his Coronation in the Academy of Florence; you cannot study it in detail, — it is too battered, but you feel that here in his last work he is, as decorator, more impressive than he has ever been elsewhere. This also is a Coronation of the Virgin, filling with its dusky richness the half-dome of the duomo's apse, a great mouldering, decaying, splendid decoration. Fra Lippo always loved color better than did most of his Tuscan contemporaries, and the Umbrian country has laid its Midas-touch upon the Tuscan traveller. Time, too, and winter damp — for they have a little winter up here on the hills, even in this southern country — have helped to paint the picture. They have laid a delicate bloom upon the ultramarine, brightened the gold here and dulled it there, run the blue into green, the green into blue, flaked away the surfaces till the brocades have other patterns, other tints, than those the artist gave them, have confused the lines but enriched the colors, until

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few frescoes can approach its mingling of attractiveness and dignity.

"The bowery, flowery angel brood" has grown into great solemn figures; if the sweet-faced Lucrezia of Florence be here we cannot see her for the distance and the confusion of forms. Perhaps some of the naturalism of the early Lippo, the Lippo who lodged with "a certain Master Cosimo of the Medici i' the house that caps the corner," is hidden in that same confusion, or by the marring of time, or is swallowed up in the great cracks that seam the surface. What we do see is the ordered company of the saints and angels with the rainbow and the planets beneath their feet, all kneeling or standing around the great *mandorla* within whose rays the Eternal Father crowns Our Lady. It is no longer the familiar and joyous Lippo of the Prato choir, but an artist who cares for his decoration rather than for his story, a Lippo grown grave and architectonic. There are other of his works in the choir, but the abiding impression comes from the great semi-dome.

Spoleto has not many art treasures, as the Spoletans said to the magnificent Lorenzo when he wished to take the body of his painter to Florence; they added that they should like to keep his bones with them as an object of local interest. Perhaps they were right, for Lorenzo gave those bones a

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tomb which the sacristan still shows with pride, and if the monks thought "*caret monasterium miraculo*," they got a very fair one in that "Coronation."

One hardly likes to remain under the vaulting of Spoletan churches because what is outside is so very beautiful; not the town, wonderfully picturesque as it is, but the setting of the town: the high mountains with their rocks and grass slopes; their dense woods; their ilexes and pines; the convent of Monte Luco on its platform, and the massive, uplifted citadel, built by Theodoric, held long by Lombard dukes that they and their brothers of Benevent might together cow the southern country in the days of rough blows and *jus Longobardorum*, and fortified and restored again by Rossellino that papal nepotism might keep it in the days of poison and purchased battle. Below the citadel, the gigantic aqueduct of Theodelapius spans between the town and the Monte Luco, a chasm two hundred and seventy feet deep: here as the torrent dashed far below, and the wheels of a mill-tower clattered above, the landscape combined Alpine grandeur with the loveliness of the south. There was a sense of swimming in light; one half closed the eyes, to temper the radiance reflected back from the dazzling greenery above, barred by the purple trunks of the olives, and strove to note and memorize the bewilderingly shifting succession of impressions.

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Just after we had left the edge of a flower-bordered precipice, and as we lingered before a church front whose sculptured bible-heroes were crusaders in full harness, we fished up a pearl from the ideas of a courteous (all are courteous here) and handsome woman who stood knitting by the road side.

Alexander VI. gave Spoleto as a duchy to his daughter Lucrezia: now Italians usually delight in the picturesqueness of their history and the salient points of what little they have heard, and embroider upon the same. We expected from our *Spoletana* something of the same interest in her Renaissance duchess that a Sienese would accord to Pia de' Tolomei, or a Ravennese to Francesca de' Polentani; but we had not counted on the fact that in Italy an hundred thousand know their Dante for one who has heard of Alexander VI. "Can you tell us," we asked in good faith, while we looked down upon Spoleto, "which palace in the town was that of Lucrezia Borgia?" The woman raised her handsome face, still young, but with its forehead, under the pent-house of black hair, lined from the constant half closing of the eyes against the tyrannous sun. "Lucrezia Borgia?" she said; then repeating it more slowly asked, "Have I the name aright?" We assented, and she continued in rather a regretful tone, "I do not think there is *any one* of that name living in

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Spoleto." We smiled and thanked her, but Umbrian courtesy was not easily baffled. She looked at the driver of the carriage and he at her, and seeming to have found her solution, she said brightly, "But hear now, I will tell you what to do; you ask at the hotels; very likely she is in one of them." "She was Duchess of Spoleto nearly four hundred years ago," said we. Driver and woman threw back their heads in delighted laughter. "No wonder we do not know her," they cried, and they must have repeated their story that evening often enough to establish Lucrezia firmly in the minds of a whole quarter.

If Madonna Lucrezia had been at our hostelry she would have found it not unfamiliar in character, for it was one of those hotel-palaces conventionally expected in Italy, and utterly unconventional in every other way. *Albergo*, *locanda*, palace, castle, cavern; you might call it anything you pleased, rather than a hotel of our nomenclature. It was a rambling, heaven-knows-how-far kind of place, suggestive of brigands, suggestive of starvation by hopeless loss of way, and imprisonment for life in some unvisited part of the house, but suggestive of little comfort in its bare walls, brick floors, and echoing, arched landings. The beds herded together in a lonely way in the middle of our huge room; an enormous *salotto* with a brick floor opened from it, while underneath the windows, there was a kind



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of hanging garden with a thick battlemented wall. Below stairs things seemed more civilized, and were decidedly interesting, for one room was filled with *cassoni*, great coffers richly carved and in some cases gilded. These were piled one on top of another, in a way that suggested unlimited quantity and the possibility of purchase; but no, they had all been contracted for by dealers and were going to Paris! Faience plates hung thickly upon the wall, faience, too, glittered in the dining room, and a handsome majolica cylinder held artificial flowers amid a carnival of natural ones. The wealth of ware was impressive, for Spoleto, in its primitiveness, and above all in its proximity to the centres of a Renaissance Art industry which flourished greatly in Umbria and the Marches, suggested no unfaith as to the antiquity of its ceramics, but the landlord told us that all this pottery was modern, of Gubbio truly, and having full right to the famous stamp of the town, but of the Gubbio of to-day.

Fragments of old Roman, and very early mediæval sculptural ornament set in more recent masonry, spangled the walls of Spoletan churches almost as liberally as the plates did our dining-room; truly those Spoletani who wished to keep Fra Lippo as a relic appear to have been by nature rather pickers-up and preservers of curiosities than creators of original art, and in this respect the town



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seems remote from her Umbrian sisters, Assisi, Perugia, and Foligno. The coronal circlet of the Lombard dukes settled so firmly upon her brow that expansion was unlikely in the direction of thinking for herself. She was a much governed city, and her rôle was to fight for her masters, and fight she did most gallantly for her great mistress Rome, only twenty-five years after she became a Roman colony.

In the town wall, with a tower shooting up beside it, is still the gate called *Porta d' Annibale*, *Porta della Fuga*, gate of Hannibal, or of the Flight; the inscription on it proclaims that here the Carthaginians in 217 B.C. were sharply repulsed by the citizens. What does it matter if it were not at exactly that point of the circumvallation? Wall and gate were there before the battle, and it was a brave sally against one who was marching straight from a crushing victory at *Thrasymene*. Indeed, in a sense, these hill towns are older than Rome; an older blood than even the Latin may run in the veins of the shepherds who live high up on the mountains which frame them in. There, inaccessible to the ordinary occurrences of life in the valley, too few and too poor to have been worth any trouble to the far-reaching arm of Rome, the herdsmen looking down may have seen far below them the lighted wisps upon the horns of *Fabius's* cattle, the carnage

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of Thrasymene, the battles of the barbarians, and of the Renaissance, without ever being drawn into the whirlpool; going on marrying and burying and perpetuating, in the mountains of a changing Italy, the blood of Oscan, Sabellian, and Samnite, and living much as they do nowadays, before those Volumnii who sit in effigy in their tomb by the Tiber side came into existence. As for the hill-cities, at first independent, then "erected into Roman colonies," with their backs set against the mountains, behind their girdle of towers and under their carapaces of tiles, like Roman soldiers beneath their tortoise of shields, each one beat off the barbarians again and again, was left high and dry by the flood which broke about its base, and keeping the old Latin stock within its walls had a good right to boast, each one of them, *Civitas Romana sum*.

Perhaps of all the beauty of the most lovely of lands, the beauty of Umbria is, if not the greatest, the most moving. Not the riotous color of Naples with its bay; not even the opalescence of the Venetian lagoons can surpass the high serenity of the mountain forms that lift into a clearer atmosphere a landscape thickly set with Umbrian and Tuscan hill towns; the Etruscan city of Perugia, holy Assisi upon its mountain, Trevi piled volcano-like in sunlit pyramid with bright volume of cloud for a smoke wreath behind its pinnacle, and Orvieto rising sheer

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SO-CALLED TEMPLE OF CLITUMNUS













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and circling its precipices like a coronet with Maitani's church for a central jewel. It is more beautiful than anything that one can say or even carry away in the mind. A glory is upon the whole land, upon its laden vines and rocks and olive orchards; its gentle, long-horned white oxen; its handsome, kindly people telling with proprietary pride of their towns, "*molto antiche*;" of their masters; "our Perugino" here, "our Pinturicchio" there, "our Luca," "our Gentile"; "*vini nostrani*," these with a rich tang of the soil. Night after night we saw from our windows, in rank behind rank, pure lines of mountain forms, not terrible or serrated like the Alps, but calm and billowing; saw the vast tract of country where Tuscany and Umbria run together, and where two streamlets rising side by side, narrow as brooks, wide in fame as the world, hurry north and south towards Florence and Rome. History lay strata deep before us. Flaminius climbed here; Hannibal hid there in the mist; *condottieri* marched over mountains tufted by Perugino's trees; Garibaldians trooped to the reconquest of Etruria over hills filled with the arms and bones of Lucumos that rusted and mouldered before ever Rome was republican. In a rich and changing country impressions crowded upon the mind and brain till they could hold no more: now we looked upon the undecipherable records of an almost forgotten peo-

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ple ; again upon Perugia's blood-stained, wine-washed church, or we followed in the footsteps of Saint Francis, or descended into Etruscan tombs, or traced the wanderings of the painters.

One wondered at the close of each day that the hours could again have yielded in new form such fresh harvest of delight. At sunset, the joyous clamor of the bells burst forth. Pealing and humming, they furrowed the air with mighty reverberations to which the nerves vibrated in unison. Perugia called to Assisi, Assisi to Spoleto ringing the Angelus, saluting Mary, Mother of the God who died to save so beautiful a world.

ASSISI



# ASSISI

## I

IT is only recently that modern methods of study and research have been applied to the investigation of the records of the life of Saint Francis, and that the "Fioretti" have found a commentator who is at once learned, intuitive, and free from the limitations of either intolerance or superstition. M. Paul Sabatier has invested the already winning figure of the Assisan saint with a new charm. He has revealed to us the man Francis struggling for freedom of thought and speech to realize in the outer life the indwelling ideal, and striving for the liberation of love and faith from the tyranny of theology.

Under the childlike sweetness and grace of the devotee and the poet M. Sabatier has divined the innovator and the reformer opposing a persistent resistance to the formalizing tendencies of the church, and zealously guarding the integrity of his conception of the religious life from incessant attack. The Saint of M. Sabatier loses none of the appealing tenderness of the "Brother" of the "Fioretti," but he gains in vitality and above all in moral

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force. This earnest and purposeful Francis who wills and plans, is not only a lover, a singer, and a seer, but the strenuous founder of the Franciscan revival, and the discoverer of a new world of feeling. How many saints have had to wait until our own eclectic and catholic age for a worthy biographer! As the blessed wafer at Bolsena bled in the hands of the unbelieving priest, so the lives of holy men and women when handled by the doubter show human blood under the crust of monkish tradition. Beneath the touch of the reverent sceptic is their humanity manifested. The saints of "Golden Legends" and "*Acta Sanctorum*" lack vitality, they are not human; their biographers did not understand them and consequently did not see wherein their real greatness lay. The monks who wrote of them overlooked their true titles to love and veneration to dwell on the self-inflicted tortures and the hallucinations which are the accidents, not the essentials, of saintliness.

They who in force of volition, in intensity of emotion, transcend the ordinary capacity of man are represented as less than man. The violent who take the kingdom of heaven by storm; they of the unswerving purpose and the overmastering desire; they who surpass their fellows as much by the ardor of their affections as by the nobility of their ideals, are too often described as passionless,



characterless abstractions, or as puppets moved by the hand of an ecclesiastical superior.

Saint Francis has been more fortunate. He has been twice portrayed with rare insight by two loving disciples; by Brother Leo in the thirteenth, and by Brother Paul in the nineteenth century. The quality of M. Sabatier's "*Saint François d'Assise*," eludes definition. One cannot frequent the society of the blessed with impunity. Prolonged and constant study of a powerful and alluring personality tends to unconscious assimilation of the salient traits of that personality. It is perilous to live in close communion with saintliness unless we would become holy. M. Sabatier has dwelt with the rose. Spiritual habitation with the memory of Saint Francis has left its impress upon every chapter of his biography. "Love is a great seer," said Plato. While remaining mentally and morally French and Protestant, M. Sabatier's heart has turned Franciscan. His work affords a notable instance of the illumination which sympathy and intuition bring to modern methods of research.

It is to this friend and interpreter of Saint Francis that we owe a more assured knowledge of the springs of that European movement which has been wisely termed the Franciscan revival. For "*Il Poverello*," "the little poor man," was one of the makers of Italy. To him not only religion, but art

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and literature are deeply indebted, and in the short list of the precursors of the Renaissance his name leads all the rest.

In order to estimate at its true value the effects of the Franciscan revival, we must consider what the religion, thought, art, and poetry of the Italy of the twelfth century could offer to a soul "tormented by desire of things divine."

At the end of the twelfth century the church had ceased to minister to the spiritual needs of her people. The learned were occupied in asking and answering theological conundrums; in arguing about symbols, and in endless discussion, comparison, and classification of unrealities. It was a strange, phantasmal world, this of the mediæval theologian; a world in which facts and actuality had no place and in which keen and vigorous minds were employed in a perpetual threshing of mere words with apparently no cognizance of what words represent. This endless wrangling over abstractions rings hollow to a modern ear. Did generations of men really devote time and thought to piecing together doctrinal Chinese puzzles? Had the natural human rationalism, the sound, prosaic good sense of Paganism entirely disappeared from the sphere of thought? Had reverence for words, the words of former theologians, replaced the pursuit of ideas?

It would seem so to the modern reader who wan-

ders bewildered through these labyrinths of dialectic. Nature and man had no existence for the mediæval "chop logic." He looked neither up to the stars above his head nor down at the flowers at his feet. He ignored his own soul as utterly as he overlooked his neighbor's heart. There was then no lack of intellectual effort or of the spirit of inquiry, but they were devoted to the examination and demonstration of ineptitudes. All wisdom was supposed to be contained in the Scriptures and in the Patristic writings; study was therefore limited to them, and the mind, exercised only between certain lines of demarcation, was "servant of all work to a foregone conclusion."

Mental effort was wasted in wresting every passage in these works from its obvious and literal meaning and investing it with some far-fetched and fantastic purport. The dialecticians had lost sight of the fact that terms have no value in themselves, and only become legal tender in intellectual affairs when they represent things. The machinery of thought could not be applied to the realities of life by minds numbed by the weight of authority. The technique of reasoning had been perfected, but for lack of knowledge it worked *in vacuo* and forceful intellects lost themselves in the ordered mazes of metaphysics. Such was the result of the despotism of dogma over thought. It

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would be a risible, were it not a melancholy spectacle, to see the scholar driven from the Elysian fields of lofty speculation into this treadmill of dreary dialectic, of sterile straw-splitting.

The supremacy of theology extended into the sphere of morals. Ecclesiastical authority had established a new standard of righteous living. The monastic virtue of obedience to a spiritual superior was ranked far above the active charity of the primitive Christian. The belief in the brotherhood of man and the obligations it imposes which Christianity had inherited from the Stoic was ignored. The benevolent impulses which the early church had stimulated and directed were repressed. There was a keen sense of duty, but it was of the duty of every man to save his own soul. Moral obligation severed from any regard for the well-being and happiness of others was perforce devoid of human significance. Naturally enough, the technique instead of the end of virtuous acts and of pure living became all-important. "It is of more consequence for us to act rightly than to do good," wrote Abélard.

An ideal of human conduct which ignored human relations impelled those who aspired to the "higher life" to renounce family affections and cast aside ease and pleasure; not to secure the spiritual liberty which is obtained by the sacrifice of domestic

ties and humdrum cares, not to escape the tyranny of the senses which obscures the inward vision, but because for some mysterious reason, continence, fasting, and solitary confinement were supposed to be agreeable to the Divinity. They who practised these mortifications by pleasing the Creator put him under promise to pay for gratification received.

Even the temporal works of mercy were empty of altruism. The pious who relieved the wants of the unfortunate were not moved by pity for suffering, but were "laying up treasure in heaven," and investing their capital in celestial securities. Imagine the awful loneliness of this inner life!—each human creature's potentialities for good and usefulness absorbed in the salvation of his own soul. This conception of holy living reminds one of Beckford's hall of Eblis, a place of eternal torment, where each lost spirit, his hand pressed upon his flaming heart, wandered restlessly about in spiritual isolation, with no thought of his fellow-sufferers.

If a tender and ardent nature turned from the dreary formalism of the church, the thought-deadening lore of the scholars, to art, he found that the same desiccating influence which had converted religion and learning into a banquet of husks, had parched the life out of painting. Madonna was a lifeless, bedizened idol, a mere Christ-bearer with no love for her burden; the divine Child was a star.



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ing puppet, with nothing of the pathos or grace of childhood, and the Saints were gorgeously robed lay figures. Humanity was banished from this glistening, unreal world of art. The Byzantine model (for the Greeks were the purveyors of Italian painting in the twelfth century) for the Holy Family was the imperial family. The Blessed Virgin was represented as an Oriental empress; the Holy men and women as patricians; the Saviour as an emperor tricked out with the imperial finery, or as a livid, hideous corpse, and Paradise was the gilded palace of Constantinople. As for ordinary human beings, landscape, trees, flowers, animals, sky, or sea, — the realities of life, — such vulgarities were never essayed by these aristocratic artists, who portrayed only the most exalted personages of the imperial and celestial courts. Pictures were manufactured from time-honored recipes, like the cloyingly delicious rose-confections, or the minutely gorgeous embroideries of Eastern convents, and held the same relation to the needs of daily life.

There remained one city of refuge for the free spirit. Poetry had enfranchised itself from the numbing tyranny of formalism. The poets, troubadours, minnesingers, were the only free-men of the early middle-ages. They alone among these spiritual serfs dared to love and to sing, nay, at times even to think, and consequently to doubt.



In an age which warred against family ties and natural affections, which considered marriage a half sin, a reluctant concession to the frailty of human nature, they filled Europe with one great hymn to love, and to the love most opposed to the monastic ideal, the love of man and woman.

*Ex forte dulcedo* : out of the skeleton of the old Latin speech the new languages were growing, and the first blossom which they bore was the love-song, or rather the love-hymn. The poets, as though moved by one impulse, united to divinize the passion which the churchmen had degraded, and almost simultaneously in Provence, France, and Germany, love became a religion. Spontaneous and genuine as was the sentiment, in the hands of form-loving peoples it soon assumed the formulæ and ceremonial of worship. As amorphous emotion received a definite impress, the new cultus speedily acquired its sacred language, its symbols, its observances, its ritual, and its creed. Love's devotees fasted, prayed, suffered in penances, and watched in weary vigils. Vows, litanies, acts of adoration, were offered to the new divinity, as well as humble supplications, and devout thanksgivings. The sacrifices of his votaries were recompensed with blissful visions, and ecstatic swoons, and miracles were worked on the graves of his pilgrims and martyrs.

It was no mere lip service that was given to the

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god. It was the oblation of the heart, the soul, and the flesh, a more complete sacrifice of the whole man than the furious and tyrannical Amor of antiquity had received. The love of the knight for his lady, of the minstrel for the *châtelaine*, was no brief fever like the love of the Latin poets, no fierce, devouring blaze like the tragic passions of the Greek drama. Nor was it a cosy hearthfire like the tranquil affection of Plutarch for his wife, or the patronizing tenderness of the kind, rather meddling husband in the "Æconomicus." Mediæval love was a reverently nurtured altar-flame, and the lover was a priest whose service was accounted holy.

The forces which had long been silently at work, modifying, transforming the conditions of human development, had finally produced a new type of human creature and a new manner of feeling. It is difficult to define the factors which had caused this revolution in the province of emotion. The Teutonic respect for women can hardly be counted among them as it was in Provence, and France, that these changes first manifested themselves and became articulate. The worship of the Virgin Mary, and especially the prominence which such worship gave to the feminine virtues, had profoundly affected the earlier ideal of woman. The type of human excellence in antiquity, and in the dark ages which followed antiquity, had been a strong man. The

moral qualities which Paganism prized and exalted were those which are more often found in men than in women. The ideal of the Stoic was essentially virile. It was reserved for Christianity to cultivate the virtues of the heart and to teach the sanctity of weakness. Gentleness, purity, resignation, were exalted by the church, and inspired a moral enthusiasm which magnanimity, self-control, and fortitude aroused in the stern sages of Paganism. The ideal of human perfection had been feminized; it had ceased to be heroic and had become saintly. Christianity had raised to far higher honor than they had previously possessed the moral qualities in which women excel.

At the same time, feudalism, by making women the king's vassals, had increased their personal independence. The heiress of rich fiefs and many domains was an important personage politically as well as socially. She was a proprietor and an administrator; the equal of her husband, and often the superior of her poet-lover. The difficulties and dangers of castle life, and the possession of authority had developed in her a rare and precious quality, — a deep sense of personal responsibility.

Very naturally the poetical homage offered to a woman of exalted social position and of strong character would differ essentially from the love poems of a Propertius or Catullus to a venal *puella*

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For the first time in the history of erotic poetry the lover addressed his lady as his superior — not in any feudal sense, for a mutual affection has levelled all artificial distinctions — but as a being nobler, better than himself, whose tenderness is to be won and kept only by the strenuous exercise of many virtues.

The knight, to enjoy his beloved's favor must be brave and generous, and gentleness must go hand in hand with his valor. He must be as discreet as he is eloquent, and as careful of his lady's name as he is careless of his own life in her service. Faithful must he be, with a heart-whole fidelity unknown to the prosaic and carnal lovers of antiquity. Humility and patience must be his as well as courage and courtesy; the virtues of the monk as well as those of the paladin. In a word, the typical lover as he is described by an army of knightly singers is the perfect man and all high qualities are his — save one.

There is no doubt that such an ideal, however imperfectly it was realized in action, was a puissant incitement to virtuous conduct and a constant counsel of perfection. More powerful still was its appeal to the strongest of our spiritual instincts, the desire of self-sacrifice, which is at once the root and aliment of all great passions. By making the happiness of one individual depend on the happiness of another, the bonds of self were loosened, and the true lover's

longing to give himself was fulfilled. In fine, the desire of the man for the woman, and the woman for the man, had been transmuted, by changes in social conditions and in habits of thought, into an ennobling and unselfish love and that love had been given a worthy medium of expression by a host of poets. The force and prowess of manhood were consecrated to the service of a lofty ideal. The spirit had descended in tongues of flame on its apostles, and Europe, stunned with dialectic, listened eagerly to the new gospel of love.

Why, then, did not this revelation satisfy the higher needs of earnest and passionate natures, who had found learning barren, art mechanical, and religion void of spiritual significance? Why could not solace be found in this enchanted region of poetry? Because these tender and elevated sentiments, this unselfish devotion, were consecrated to the service of an unlawful passion, and this new love which was regenerating the human heart, and giving speech to the dumb nations, was the love of another man's wife. The seeker after perfection could hardly find it in the glorification of adultery. *Les fruits de l'amour illégitime sont toujours amers*, and the wings of an illicit love are crushed beneath a burden of perfidy.

This was the spiritual inheritance, these were the conditions which obtained in Italy when Saint



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Francis entered the religious life. Devotion, wisdom, and beauty were apparently extinct. The capacity for uplifting emotion, the gift of poetic expression, were bondslaves to lawless love. In the political world, the nascent industrialism of the Tuscan towns, the rise of a brood of rapacious princelings, the fierce enmities of city to city, and the civic strife in the burgs, showed vitality enough and to spare, but as these different forms of energy lacked direction, they were devastating, rather than fecundating forces.

How were these spiritual conditions changed by a man feeble in health, comparatively ignorant, utterly penniless; who was unaided by the temporal power, and who refused to borrow the might of the church? The answer to this query is not a new one: *quia multum amavit*. "Give me a place to rest my lever, and I will move the world," said Archimedes. The lever of Saint Francis was love, and its resting place was in the heart of man.

The Franciscan revival was the invasion of the realm of religious thought by emotion. It was the advent of tenderness into a sad and dreary universe.

It transformed the *hortus siccus* of the theologian into the *hortus inclausus* of an ardent and devout soul, and the Christ who in art had become a Byzantine emperor, and in theology had



been discussed into a frigid abstraction, returned as the teacher of Nazareth, the martyr of Calvary, to knock at the door of men's hearts.

As the artist must constantly turn to nature, lest his art become mere artifice, so must the religious seek again and again the moving tenderness of the Gospel, if they would be free from the letter that kills, the dogma that deadens human sympathies. This liberation of piety from the bonds of theology was the mission of Saint Francis. Possessing the practical good sense of the middle-class Italian, he was unpreoccupied with wire-drawn distinctions, unwearied with subtle analyses of divine essences. Mystical and visionary, as he was, a natural rationalism determined his attitude towards the dialectic of the doctors, and counselled him to disregard the scholastic chaff that pedants had been threshing, over and over again, ever since the days of Peter Lombard. "Christ so loved you that he lived and died for you. Love him and his creatures" is the *credo* of Saint Francis. A creed as free from intellectual subtilizing as it is untouched by the spiritual selfishness, the unsocial egotism, which chill the reader of the "Imitatione" like a cold breath from a tomb.

With Saint Francis began that great movement towards the secularization of religion which has gone on age after age in an ever-widening circle of

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influence, making the practice of devotion an integral part of life, rather than a function at variance with life. With him piety ceased to be a professional affair, and holy living became possible to the layman. He re-established the doctrine of human solidarity. He extended the antique notion of the brotherhood of man with his fellow, to a kinship with all nature, animate and inanimate. His great heart overflowed with tenderness and compassion for every sentient creature that can love and suffer. The tie which unites all created things was visible to this gentle seer, who, anticipating the discoveries of modern science, saw the invisible links of that infinite chain which binds "*il nostro fratellino Jesulino*" to "our little brothers the birds."

Consequently the Franciscan revival meant the sanctification of human affection, and its introduction into the sphere of religious aspiration. Franciscan tenderness for humanity ignores the theological conception of bereavement being welcomed as a dispensation of Providence: witness the beautiful story of Lucchesio of Poggibonsi, a follower of Saint Francis, who, after a long and devout life spent in the society of a wife he dearly loved, refused to be separated from her after death, and lying down beside her made the sign of the cross and died peacefully, quite sure that God would not wish him to live on in loneliness.

FLORENCE

SANTA CROCE

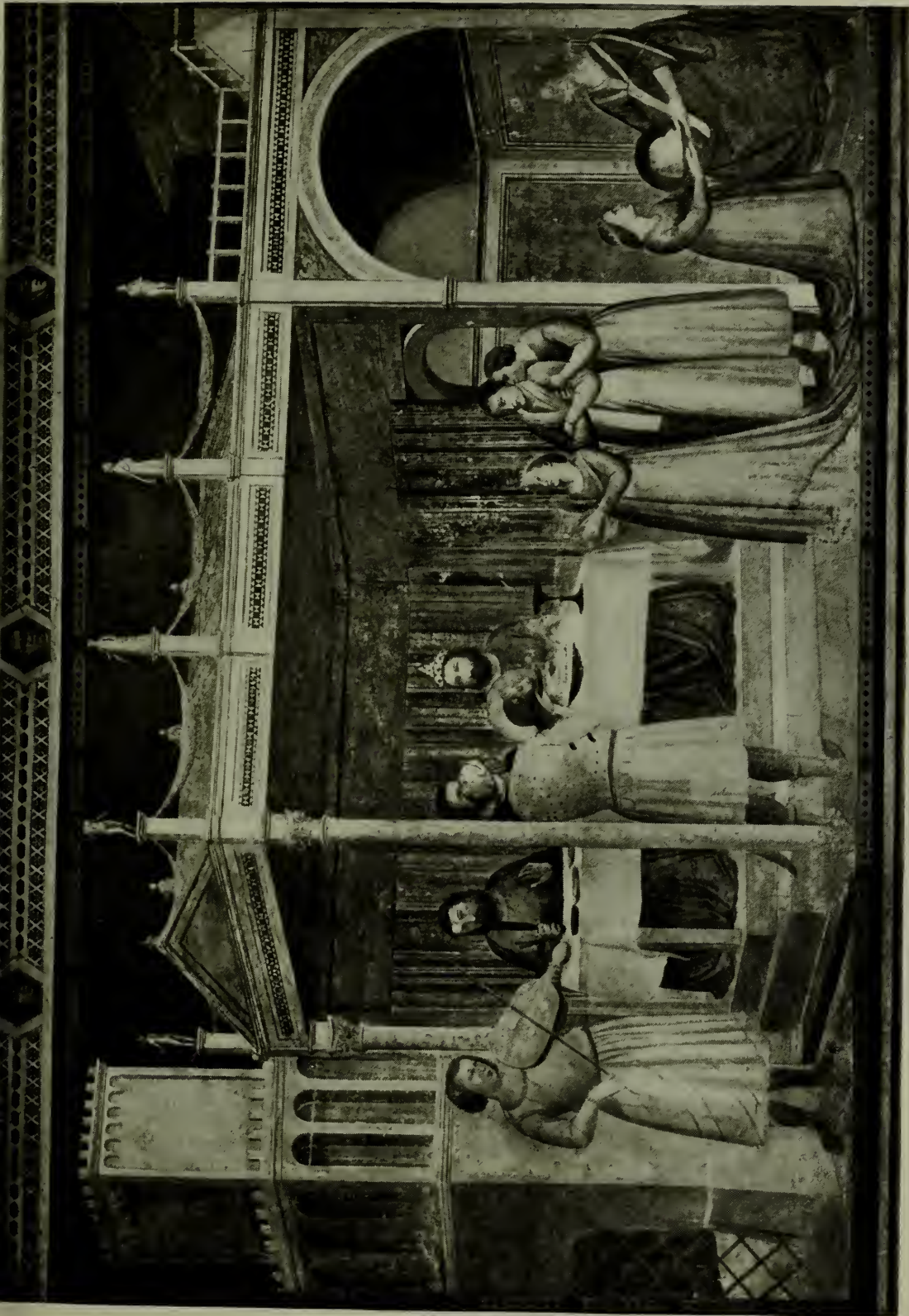
GIOTTO DI BONDONE

THE FEAST OF HEROD













The painters might well call Saint Francis patron, for he first made the mystery of the Incarnation a living reality. The effect on the plastic arts of the humanization of the Gospel narrative was not so immediate as its influence on the more impressionable and less technical art of the poet, but the humble *tableaux vivants* of the Nativity, and of the Adoration in the Manger which Saint Francis arranged in the Umbrian villages at Christmas, in order to bring the beauty and pathos of the Divine sacrifice home to Italian hearts through impressionable Italian eyes, have left an indelible impress on the plastic art of the Renaissance.

Not less fructifying in its influence on poetry was this humanization of things divine. The hymn of Saint Francis to the Sun, celebrating the strength and beauty of sun and moon, wind and fire and water, awoke an echo in a thousand hearts which had vibrated to the puissant charm of the good, brown earth and of common earthly things. Voicing devout aspiration in the terms of human affection, he employed the new medium, the speech of the people, in this noble, though rude hymn. Italian devotional poetry; the rapturous lyrics of Jacopone da Todi, the more chastened yet exquisitely poignant lauds of Girolamo Benevieni, down to the modern Tuscan peasant's songs to the Virgin were the fruits of this new field of poetic endeavor. The

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*Cantico del Sole* proved as fertilizing as the rays of the sun itself. Saint Francis consecrated the speech of humble folk, the simple, limpid, straightforward language of every-day life and of peasants and burghers to pious uses, to celebrate man's blithesomeness in the beauty of earth, man's joyful aspiration to the glories of heaven. Poetry, which had been aristocratic and chivalrous, like the Tuscan noble who became a citizen of Florence, renounced its feudal state, and turned *Popolano*. Through the *Cantico del Sole* and the "Fioretti," the *toscaneggiamento* of the Italian language received a powerful impulse, and an admirable instrument of expression was perfected for Dante and Boccaccio. The modern Italians consider the "Fioretti" as a model of diction — of that simple, pellucid style which, though void of literary artifice, is never languid or trivial.

## II

IF we would realize the fructifying power of the teaching and example of Saint Francis, we must compare them with the doctrines and methods of an earlier school of ethics, — a school, which from its remotest origins, had more completely severed virtue from interest than any other system of religion or philosophy which has obtained a lasting ascendancy over the human mind, or satisfied the needs of the human soul.

Many years before, a man far less fortunate than Saint Francis, an exile, a slave, and a cripple, had, by the strength of a magnanimous soul, attained happiness and made of his life and work a magnificent hymn to divine providence. Never have the goodness of the Creator, the omnipresence of the infinite wisdom, been more profoundly felt or more forcibly proclaimed. Never has one so poor in all that the world can bestow, found within himself such inexhaustible store of spiritual treasure. That “the kingdom of heaven is within” has never been more clearly demonstrated than by the life of this pagan slave. With no hope of immortality, expect-

ing nothing, asking nothing, following virtue as a freeman, enfranchised by a noble despair, Epictetus enriched the world by the truly sublime spectacle of a conscience “ *en équilibre dans le vide.*”

But if the sage was a friend of the gods, the saint was a lover of Christ. The Stoic founded his ideal of human felicity on the suppression of the affections, the devotee on the sanctification of the affections. Reason is the supreme arbiter of Epictetus, ardent faith of Saint Francis. The imagination which was sternly stifled by the former, was stimulated by the latter. The moral factor in the philosopher's ethical system was the dignity of man and the freedom of the will. The master-idea of the saint's theory of life was man's weakness and his need of love and pity. Mansuetude and joy were the virtues most esteemed by the Tuscan; magnanimity and self-control were the moral qualities most prized by the Roman. Epictetus' philanthropy was untender, as was natural enough in one who did not believe that pain and sorrow were afflictions, but opportunities furnished by the gods to prove man's virtue; Saint Francis's rigors were full of affection. The belief in the brotherhood of man was professed by them both with equal fervor, but Saint Francis extended his fraternal feeling to every sentient creature, and Gautama was not more tender to the brute creation.

## ASSISI

The philosopher ignored the virtues of the heart; the saint was blind to the intellectual virtues. Epictetus exalted the will; Saint Francis enthroned the imagination. There is something cold and harsh in the stoic that is antipathetic to gentle and loving natures; there is a morbid and hysterical tendency in the saint that repels both positive and philosophical minds. The moral dignity of Epictetus was not without a touch of arrogance; the humility of Saint Francis was sometimes lacking in self-respect. By the doctrines of Epictetus, the mind is elevated; by the words of Saint Francis, the emotions are quickened; the one is a bracing tonic, the other a heart-warming cordial.

Saint and sage alike revered that holy poverty which means liberty by freeing man from narrow interests and mean anxieties. Epictetus was no cynic; he did not despise the graces and decencies of life; he would only have us remember that "*non dux sed comes voluptas*;" and if we "fix our affections on an earthen pot, we must say to ourselves that what we love is but an earthen pot, so that when it is broken we may not be downcast nor afflicted." Abstinence was but discipline for the body and exercise for the will; it was valuable merely to secure the dominion of the spirit over the flesh.

Saint Francis was not an ascetic. His renun-



ation of the world's goods was also to ease himself of useless burdens, to secure freedom of spirit from petty cares. The Paupertas of which he was the *amoroso drudo*, the loving paramour, was not monastic poverty, that daughter of the horseleech which is ever crying, "Give, give!" but the noble poverty of Zeno, of Thoreau, of Mazzini, and of the apostles. Nowhere in the "Fioretti" is it stated that fasting and privation are in themselves pleasing to God. They are the means by which the man who would be free dominates the tyrant within, and Saint Francis's attitude towards mortification is rather that of the Stoic than the monk.

But where he differs from them both is in the spontaneous nature of his sacrifice, and in the joyousness of his renunciations. Hunger, cold, pain, humiliation are gifts which he blithely brings to his beloved. These are the trials which the true lover seeks for the loved one's sake. He elects to suffer, not proudly for the sake of self-dominion, like Epictetus, not gently, resignedly like Antoninus, in obedience to inscrutable laws, but gladly, ecstatically, feeling that through pain he becomes more worthy of the beloved.

This divine love was neither the languid quietism of Molinos, nor the hysterical transports of a passionate temperament debarred from a natural and healthy exercise of the affections. Saint Francis's

sacred ardor is best defined by his own words in praise of "Brother Fire": "*Et ello è bello et jocundo, e robustioso, e forte.*"

The joy of the sage is more temperate. It is deeply imbued with religious feeling, but it is reasoned, not instinctive. The cry of a heart melting into inexpressible tenderness is almost inarticulate through excess of emotion. The philosopher's Jubilate is contained and its exaltation is controlled by a virile gravity. His most impassioned aspirations are expressed with austere simplicity; in treating great questions the wise men of the antique world disdained to appeal to the feelings or the imagination. The axioms of Epictetus possess the noble nudity of ancient marbles. "To have God for our maker and father and guardian should not that emancipate us from all sadness and all fear? . . . What can I, an old man and a cripple, do, but praise God? . . . I am a reasonable being, my mission is to praise God and I fulfil it . . . and I exhort you to join in the same song of praise."

There is no trace of the unction, the transports, or the childlike playfulness of the Umbrian in these terse, pregnant phrases. This is a religion for strong men, and Epictetus, to paraphrase the words of Plato, is no confectioner, but a physician of the soul. The wholesome bitterness of his teaching makes for spiritual health. But the reasoned felic-

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ity of the thinker is pitched on a low key. It has no kinship with the blissful elation of Saint Francis, who seemed to share the soaring rapture of the song of his sister, the lark.

Calmness and equanimity Stoicism could bestow, or at least develop; but it is extremely doubtful whether any system of philosophy which aims at the suppression of the affections stimulates light-heartedness in its followers.

The Fioretti are a Gospel of joy. Their dominant note is gladsomeness. The Saviour who reveals himself to the disciple is no longer the "man of many sorrows," but "Christ, thy teacher, and for token thereof I will give thee this sign. As long as thou livest thou shalt never feel affliction of any sort nor sadness of heart." To the followers of Saint Francis cheerfulness became a duty; melancholy, or mere moodiness, a sin. *Accidia* was punished, if not in this world, then in that hell-pit where Dante heard the sullen folk gurgling their sad refrain in the mire under the foul swamp water, —

*"Tristi fummo nel aer dolce che dal sol s'allegra.  
Portando dentro accidioso fummo  
Or ci attristiam nella belletta negra."*

And from this childlike blitheness, from this young delight in man and nature, sprang, naturally enough, a desire for expression, plastic or literary.

With happiness comes the wish and the strength to create. And therefore the light-heartedness of Saint Francis is more fertile than the high-heartedness of Epictetus.

Self-government, self-examination do not stimulate enthusiasm, and are inimical to the inrush of the spirit. The self-conscious mental attitude of the philosopher was unfavorable to spontaneity, fatal to inspiration. Fortitude, equanimity, and justice, steel and strengthen the soul, but love and faith are the fertilizing emotions which, poured upon the desert places of the spirit, cause it to bloom. Despair is sterile, and scepticism critical. To create, man must desire, believe, and hope. He must possess at once an inward vision and an outward blindness; seeing in the actual world as a tangible reality what as yet exists merely in his own mind, he gives palpable form to the indwelling image, and becomes, in his own degree, a creator.

The Vita Nuova and the frescoes of Giotto were the first-fruits of the Franciscan revival. Roman law, the noblest monument ever raised to justice, was the creation of the Stoic philosophy. Antique jurisprudence remains "one of the avowed moral beacons of the civilized globe." Saint Francis's gospel of joy has been preached all over the world, and the Fioretti have bloomed in the hearts of thousands ignorant of the name of the *Poverello*,

witness this English floweret gathered from the yellowed pages of an old book :—

“I do not know when I have had happier times in my soul than when I have been sitting at work, with nothing before me but a candle and a white cloth, and hearing no sound but that of my own breath, with God in my soul and heaven in my eye. . . . I rejoice in being exactly what I am, — a creature capable of loving God, and who, as long as God lives, must be happy. I get up and look for a while out of the window, and gaze at the moon and stars, the work of an Almighty hand. I think of the grandeur of the universe, and then sit down, and think myself one of the happiest creatures in it.”

This is the *Cantico del Sole* translated into English prose. In them both, in the Italian poet and the poor Methodist woman, perfect love has cast out fear. The awful beauty of the starry vault, the immensity of its stellar spaces, bring to them no melancholy conviction of the insignificance of our tiny globe in this vast system of worlds, but a childlike gladness and wonder “at the golden balls of heaven tossed through the night by the Hand that made them.” Inspired by love and faith, the sempstress and the unlettered saint share the serene conviction of the great astronomer who said: “I have studied the celestial clock too long not to believe in the clock-maker.”



The Fioretti have not ceased to bloom on Italian soil. In the shadow of the great chestnut-trees above Pistoia, on the Tuscan hills, they linger. This modern hymn could be sung before Saint Francis's own representation of the "Nativity," the *Presepio*, dear to the painters. Has the "*Domine non sum dignus*," the inward cry of poignant tenderness and passionate self-abasement of a devout soul, contemplating the great sacrifice, ever found sweeter expression?

*"Tu dormi oh dolce amor, ma in tanto il cuore  
Non dorme no, ma soriglia a tutte l' ore.  
O mio bello e puro agnello  
A che pensi, dimmi Tu  
O amore immenso !  
A morire per te, risponde, io penso.*

*"Ad a morir per me Tu pensi, oh Dio  
A ch' altro amare fuor di Te poss' io ?  
Oh Maria speranza mia  
S'io poc' amo il tuo Gesù  
Non ti sdegnare !  
Amalo tu per me s' io non so amare."*

### III

THE fame of Assisi is wholly the gift of its saint, for the great church, goal of pilgrim and artist, is but one concrete celebration of Saint Francis in stone and mortar, sculpture and painting, bronze and mosaic.

*Ed ora ha Giotto il grido !* for if the first name of the town be that of Saint Francis, the second is that of Giotto, who stands the central figure of those that wrought with trowel and chisel and brush the chronicle of the saint, and the church which shrines it. It is not that other famous artists are lacking ; it is not even that Giotto's best works are here — for them we go to Padua and Florence ; it is because the double church offers the most imposing example in Italy of what the school of the fourteenth century considered to be the appropriate decoration of a huge church by mural painting, and because Giotto is the greatest exponent of that school. The works at Santa Maria dell' Arena in Padua are on a higher plane ; the Spanish chapel of Florence is a remarkably perfect example of a *trecento* decorative scheme applied to a small space ; the Pisan Campo Santo offers a whole panorama of fourteenth cen-

tury art, but the Assisan church far surpasses them all in beauty and solemnity of color, in picturesque bursts of light and depths of shadow. To the student of the *decorative effect* produced by painting in fresco upon walls and vaulting, it is perhaps the most important building in Europe: we say this advisedly, and without forgetting the Sistine Chapel, the Stanze of Raphael, the Ducal Palace of Venice, the Parmesan Cupola, and many another hall or chapel.

With Raphael, Michelangelo, and Correggio, we care about the individuality of the artist, so we do in Padua with Giotto, but in the church of Saint Francis what impresses us is the decorative splendor and beauty, what interests us is the suitability to its purpose of the method employed.

In Padua, we consider Giotto as the great progressive artist, the precursor of the Renaissance whose sentiment of nature, of simplicity, of expression, brings a new force to art; in Assisi, we think of him rather as the typical *quattrocento* painter. In his best works, his greatness is all his own, and is new to Italy and the world. In Assisi, we are interested principally by what lay ready to his hand, what was old already in Byzantium and Ravenna, the principles of mural painting; the method of producing a grand effect by color and patterns upon the walls of a dimly lighted building,

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not flat-walled and vast like the Pisan campo, but abounding in complicated architectural forms and broken surfaces.

When we speak to-day of the mural quality in painting, we are apt to adduce Giotto as the typical exponent in the past, just as we name Puvis de Chavannes in the present; but this is not because Giotto invented the mural quality in Assisi, any more than Puvis invented it in the Panthéon. Giotto was its most brilliant exponent, because he was technically and spiritually the greatest artist who had displayed it for centuries, but the fundamental principles which underlie wall decoration could have been studied in Constantinople and Ravenna, nine hundred years before Giotto was born.

When we ask where did Giotto get the wonderful power of expression that he shows in his work, we reply, a little from masters and a great deal from himself; but if we are asked, how did he learn to make a wall effective by color and patterns,—patterns whether of men and women or of scrolls and plants—we must answer that he worked upon traditional lines, that some of his immediate forerunners were nearly as effective as he, and some of his remote forerunners were more effective.

When we say enthusiastically of Giotto, "There was a decorator for you! There was a muralist far more purely *decorative* than some later and even

greater men!" we are thinking, not of the superiority of his drawing and composition, but of the simple flatness of his masses, free from any elaborate modelling, the lightness and purity of his color, so suited to gloomy interiors, the excellence of his silhouette and his pattern. The layman may not deliberately reason to this effect; but he instinctively thinks of these qualities, because they are what impress him as decorative before he has time to go further in his mental appreciation to the qualities of draughtsmanship and dramatic composition. But the essentially decorative qualities did not belong especially to Giotto; he had no proprietary rights in them; they belonged to the history and development of mural painting, to the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines who had learned — centuries before Saint Francis, centuries even before the Master whom Francis served, came into the world — had learned, we say, that dimly lighted interiors required flat, pure colors with little modelling.

Now nearly all the interiors of the ancient world were dimly lighted; the mediæval Italian churches, with their narrow lancet windows of low toned jewel-like glass, were as dark as any of the antique buildings, so that the use of flat masses of pure color, the planning of an agreeable disposition of spots and of a handsome silhouette to these spots, became the canons of mediæval painting. These



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early artists had mastered thoroughly the great controlling principle of decoration, the principle of the harmony of the painting with the surrounding architecture. Because the fourteenth century had not gone beyond this fortunate simplicity to the complexity of the fifteenth, and because it had attained to a science of draughtsmanship unknown to the thirteenth century and earlier times, we call the *trecento* the golden age of the mural painter. The layman not infrequently supposes that this condition of things obtained because Giotto deliberately eschewed elaborate modelling, and said to mural painting, "thus far and no farther shalt thou go!" In eight cases out of ten, this misconception comes because the layman has been reading Ruskin; in the other two cases, because he has been reading Rio or Lord Lindsay. In reality, Giotto said nothing of the sort; he was a great artist, he saw and felt with simplicity and dignity; doubtless he would, under any circumstances, have modelled with restraint, but if he had known how to do so, he would have put more modelling in his figures than he did, yes, and a good deal more of it.

Let us consider for a while, first, what motives have been imputed to Giotto; next, how his means were related to his motives, and what his methods, perforce, were, and lastly, what results he obtained.

Fifty years ago John Ruskin made Giotto the

fashion. The connoisseurs of the seventeenth century, the men whose fathers had perhaps seen Raphael, had surely seen the Urbinate's great rival, made small account of the earlier painters, to them the *Giotteschi* were barbarous, *roba vecchia*, rubbish. With Ruskin, however, the great son of Bondone took his place upon a throne. He sat there rightfully by virtue of the greatest talent which was given to any painter between Masaccio and the last great Greek or Roman artist of imperial days, but his ministrant swung the censer before him with such misplaced enthusiasm that the face of the great Tuscan was clouded for a half a century, until modern criticism dared to say nay to the poet of the "Stones of Venice" and the "Modern Painters."

Ruskin never admired anything that was unworthy (though he often fiercely contemned the worthy). He saw and praised Giotto's simplicity of treatment, but how strangely he praised, how utterly he misunderstood the artist's aim and insisted upon bringing back to the marksman game that was no spoil of his. Ruskin mistook timidity for reverence, and ascribed to the painter as a deliberate choice that which was in reality forced upon him by inexperience.

The reasoning which Ruskin, Rio, and others of their school followed, is peculiar. We will take as an example a fresco in which heavily draped

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figures stand before a city gate upon greensward. In the said greensward every little blade and leaf is made out; there is no effect; you and I with our modern ideas would not like it at all. The critic, on the contrary, is enraptured. He cries, "Only see, Giotto has painted every leaf; he felt that everything which God made should be lovingly and carefully studied!" The draperies, on the contrary, are rather broadly and simply handled, and the author implies that it is because the artist knew that the stuffs, which were only artificial, not natural, were unworthy the careful study he had given the leaves. Such criticism as this utterly misled a portion of the English reading world for at least thirty years. The right treatment by the painter was wrongly praised by the writer. Giotto was lauded, especially for leaving out that which he was incapable of putting in; his figures are but little modelled, and this slight modelling happens to be admirably suited to the kind of decoration which he was doing, but it was slight because he did not know how to carry it further. When he painted a Madonna on a panel to be seen and examined at close quarters, that which was a virtue in his decoration became a fault in his easel picture. Take the grass and draperies just mentioned; Giotto had not yet learned to paint drapery realistically, but he had the sentiment of noble composition,

PADUA

ARENA CHAPEL

GIOTTO DI BONDONE

THE BRIDAL PROCESSION OF THE VIRGIN











## ASSISI

and he arranged his folds simply and grandly, and painted them as well as he knew how, pushing them as far as he could. When he came to the grass, he found it much easier to draw a lot of little hard blades and leaves, than to generalize them into an effect. He did not know how to generalize complicated detail. The drapery was one piece, and he could arrange it in a few folds, but the blades of grass were all there, and he thought he must draw every one — he did not know how to do otherwise. Ruskin and Rio and Lord Lindsay, all regard this incapacity as a special virtue based upon a spiritual interpretation of the relative importance of things in nature and art. They account as truth in Giotto what was really the reverse of truth. In looking at such a scene as that represented in the fresco, no human being could see every blade of grass separately defined. A general effect of mass would be truth, and Giotto would have grasped it if he could have done so, but he was not yet a master of generalization.

A whole class of writers upon Christian art is like the Prior in Browning's poem, who says to Fra Lippo Lippi : —

“Your business is to paint the souls of men.

Give us no more of body than shows soul ; ’

but these writers, while appreciating the effect of certain qualities in Giotto and his followers, wholly

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misunderstood their intention. He did not leave his figures half modelled for the praise of God or for the sake of expressing soul. We might just as well say that it was for the sake of spiritual aspiration that his foreshortened feet always stood on the points of their toes, or that his snub profiles were intended to suggest meekness.

He was undoubtedly a devout churchman, every man was such in those days, but he worshipped the goddess Truth too, and put as much realism into his work as he could compass. He never thought that he could better express the spiritual nature of man by a slight or careless rendering of the body, the envelope through which that same spirit manifests itself.

It is an important fact in painting, especially in decorative painting, that in measure as an artist refines his work he may with advantage suppress one detail after another of its modelling. By the more he refines his work is meant the nearer to perfect correctness he brings his forms by truth of outline, and by putting his modelling on exactly the right spot. But this knowing what to leave out is one of the most subtle, one of the last kinds of knowledge that come to the painter. This system of elimination argues upon his part the possession of a high degree of technical accomplishment. When he can draw and paint every detail of his subject, then, and not till



## ASSISI

then, he can suppress judiciously, for a man may leave out intelligently only what he has already entirely possessed. Great painters have thus instinctively commenced by making minutely detailed studies. Now, Giotto never made one such in his life; he did not know how. He was a beginner possessing magnificent natural gifts, still a beginner, a breaker of new paths. He drew and painted the human body exactly as well as he knew how to, leaving out elaborate modelling simply because he was unable to accomplish it. One lifetime would not have sufficed this pioneer of art for the achievement of all that he did and for the compassing of a skilful technique as well.

Let us go with Giotto into his church, and see what effect he attains. Even in Italy, there is hardly any building more picturesque than is this triple church of Saint Francis of Assisi, the strange group in which three buildings are piled one upon the other, above the body of the Umbrian Saint. The little town, backed upon the flank of Mount Subasio, looks out upon a vast panorama of rolling hills and a valley where Tiber and Arno rise almost side by side. It is a battered, brown, mediæval burg clustered about the fluted columns of a temple, which announces that Minerva reigned there before Francis, but to-day the ruling presence is that Paupertas, whom we see painted as the mystic bride



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of the saint above the high altar. The town is forlornly, desolately, desperately poor, all save the splendid church, which, rising on huge arches above the valley, was founded there in 1228 by the Franciscan monks, the disciples of poverty.

We go to it by a long arcaded cloister, unlike the approach to any other such building. The columns seem to march with us like brown pilgrims; at the end of the enclosure rises a mass which is a puzzle of angles, staircases, and terraces of superimposed masonry. No distant buildings overtop the low cloister walls, and the vast, clear space of sky tells that one is upon a height. A low door is entered, and now the mountain seems above one, upon the backs of those broad low arches which go before, processional, yet depressed almost to earth, as if they bore upon them all the burdens of man's ills, to lay them upon the altar at their dim vista end. This low massiveness of the arches makes the first and last impression in the under-church of Assisi, an impression complicated and enriched by the sense of a population of saints pictured upon their far-reaching curves. It is at first confusing; everything is dominated by a sense of color, of warm dusky reds, of ultramarine grayed by the incense smoke, of brighter spots where embossed halo or curious pattern shines dimly, of distant openings where the jewelled glitter of the stained glass makes

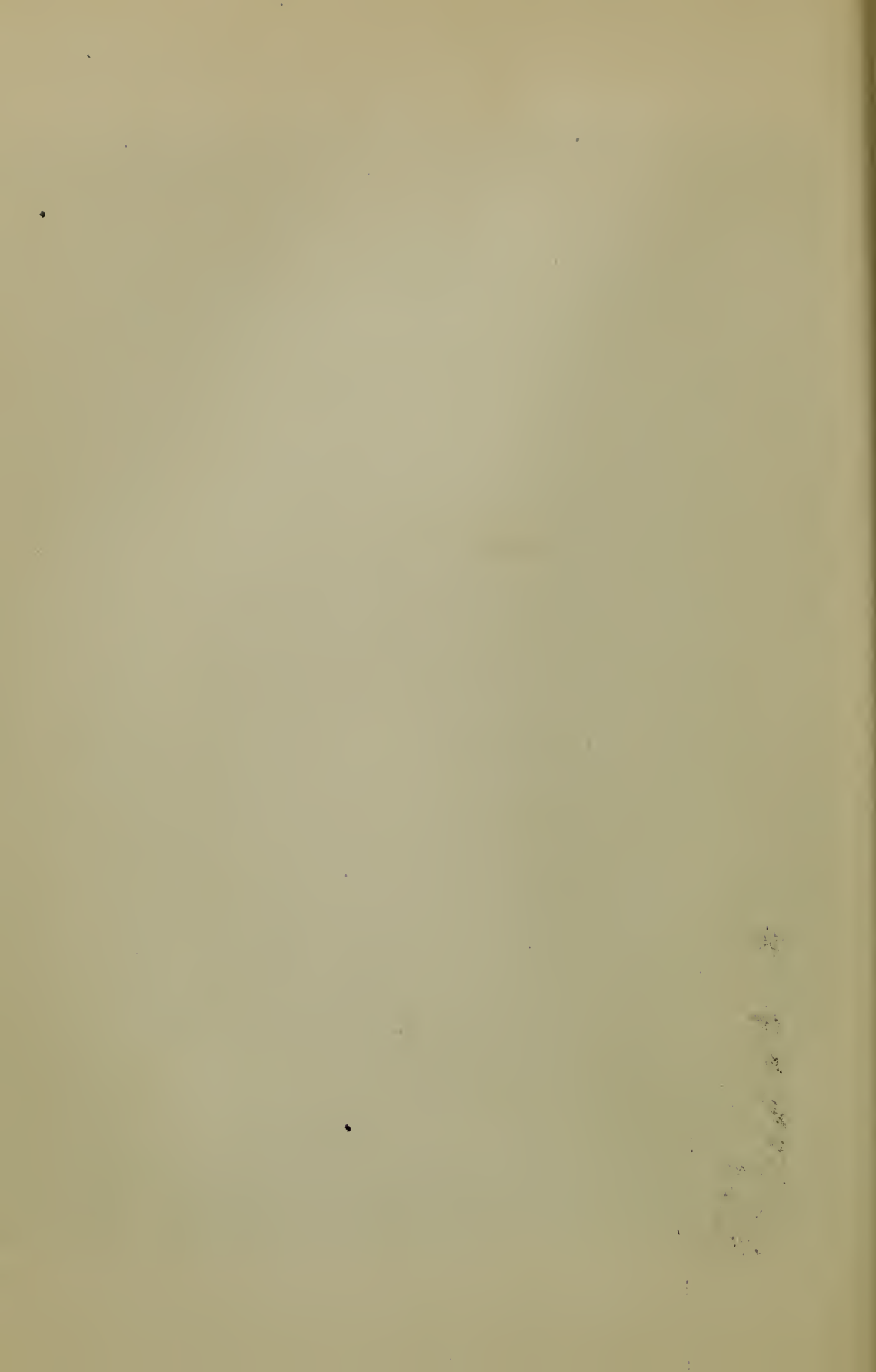
## ASSISI

INTERIOR OF THE LOWER CHURCH OF SAINT FRANCIS











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the surrounding gloom still deeper and more rich. The middle ages are calling to us with that color-voice which sounds from the walls of every decorated Gothic church, the strong and simple chord of red and blue and gold.

The true way to see the frescoes is to linger in the south transept during the morning service. Then the organ and the choral stir the air in the low space; the flame of the candles leaps and flickers; the colors seem to pulsate; the angels of Cimabue lean from the vaulting where they stand about Madonna, and the half-length saints of Simone Martini still listen after five centuries of choristers have sung to them. These saints of Martini are grand and lovely at once. Why is it that with their long oval faces, their pinched nostrils, their almond eyes, their thin-lipped, tiny mouths, they are yet so stately and solemn? They are out of drawing; such men and women could not exist. They are, indeed, slightly ridiculous at times, and yet you cannot defy that impression which, felt slightly even before the battered works of unknown masters in third-rate galleries, here deepens into the fullest force which it has in Italy. The Giotto's of Padua, unrivalled among the compositions of the fourteenth century, do not at first strike one as do these, because of the grandly perfect setting of the latter. The painters have here un-

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dertaken to do exactly what was the full measure and capacity of the medium and of the system of decoration which they used, not a bit less and not a bit more. That is the secret of their strength.

We may apply our own experience of to-day to understanding this secret of the *Giotteschi*. Take an orchestral performance, a symphony concert. If we are given just enough of it, we go away impressed, the measure of our capacity is exactly full; if the programme is twice too long, the latter half is wasted, the impression of the whole is dulled. So with these figures of Assisi. They stand up in simple, strong masses of nearly flat tint, often picked out with little minute patterns of gold or color in sword, belt, and crown, and starred and bordered drapery, never complicated in form by carefully rounded modelling, and, because of this relative flatness, they are ten times more decorative. *They have conformed to the law of sacrifice.*

Here it all is then, the example of the fourteenth century set to the mural painter of to-day; here are the flat surfaces almost devoid of modelling; here the pure colors which tell in the gloom, as no more graduated tones possibly could tell; here in the individual frescoes are the handsome general patterns suited to the surrounding form of lunette or spandrel or trefoil; and here is that restraint in the use of planes of atmospheric perspective forced upon the

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*trecento* masters by their lack of science, — all qualities directly enhancing the decorativeness, the murality, of the work and all, *nota bene*, qualities not belonging specially to Giotto or Martini, but which were recognized already in Memphis and Athens, Rome and Byzantium.

If we pass on to those qualities of a painter which were particular to Giotto, not merely as a muralist, but as an individual man, we shall hardly find their highest expression in Assisi; rather, we should find it in Padua. Nevertheless there is quite enough here to show us his main characteristics. It teaches us that, like other masters of his time, he cannot yet subtly differentiate expression, but that, unlike others, his expression is more intense, more forceful, more varied. His heads are more robust and less subtile than Duccio's. They have long, narrow eyes, short, snub noses, firm mouths, square jaws, and powerful chins; he divides them, not individually, but typically, into adolescent, adult, and aged heads. His feet are unsteady; his hands not yet understood; his draperies are for their time wonderful, simply, even grandly arranged, and if they do not express the body, at least they suggest it and echo its movements.

His animals, too small and often faulty enough, are sometimes excellent; and, like every other mediæval artist, if he wanted to put in a sheep or a

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horse or a camel, he put it in without any misgivings as to knowledge of the subject. Neither did this architect entertain any scruples regarding architecture, when he chose to paint it and, like his fellows, he set Greek temple of Assisi, Romanesque convent, and Gothic church, all upon the same jack-straw like legs, — that is to say, columns which made toys of all buildings, big or little. First and last and best, we see him as a miracle of compositional and dramatic capacity, and with this last quality, he took his world by storm.

Men before him had tried to tell stories, but had told them hesitatingly, even uncouthly, Giotto spoke clearly and to the point. This shepherd-boy, whose mountain pastures could be seen from her Campanile, taught grammar to the halting art of Florence. He taught the muse of the *trecento* to wear the buskin, so that his followers, however confused their composition might be, were at least clear in the telling of their story. Indeed he was such a dramaturgist that men for a full hundred years forgot, in the fascination of the story told, to ask that the puppets should be any more shapely, that they look one whit more like men and women.

And no wonder his contemporaries were dazzled, for Giotto added all this new science in art, this realism, this expressive force, this telling of a tale, to the solid qualities of the *trecento* craftsmen, push-

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ing even the latter beyond the capacity of the best muralists of his time. For if the wall-painter was simple perforce, Giotto was simple also by choice; simple in his arrangement of figures, never crowding them together as some of his followers did, simple in his draperies, neither crinkling them in tiny folds like Duccio, nor twisting them like Cimabue. In color, too, he is admirable: for a real color endowment with subtle variety we must wait a generation longer (for the Venetians, or rather for the Veronese subjects of Venice, for Avanzi and Altichieri upon the walls of the Paduan chapels of Saint Felix and Saint George); but what the master of Assisi undertakes to do, he accomplishes perfectly: here are measure, sobriety, dignity and richness of color, the latter quality greatly enhanced, no doubt, by age and warm reflections from the other walls with their gilding and their candle-lighted altars.

It is well to linger in the church after it is closed to the worshipping peasants, and, climbing to a level with the frescoes, gain a greater intimacy with their pictured people, going close to the really lovely faces of women in the picture where a child plunges headforemost from a window in one corner, and is miraculously restored to life in the other, and to examine the richly embossed gold background to Martini's half-length saints, who seem to watch us as from a tribune.



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Some of the finest wall pictures are ascribed to Taddeo Gaddi. Of making many books there is no end, doctors have disagreed, and no one can say yes or no conclusively, regarding many of these frescoes. For our part, remembering certain other works, we were ready to echo Longfellow's "Gaddi mi fece," and with Ouida to bid the passer-by, "Pray for the repose of the great Taddeo's soul." The works of the *trecento* have become a sort of conventual property, a glory of the school, not of the individual, for modern critics have handed about the frescoes of the Spanish chapel, the Pisan Campo Santo, and the Assisan church from Tuscan to Sienese, and from Sienese to Tuscan again. Does it greatly matter? There is room enough in those dark carven stalls, behind the altar of Assisi, for Cimabue and Giotto, Martini and Gaddi, Giunta and Puccio. There they may throne it together, and as year after year the long line of pilgrims passes to the saint's shrine, may see another and more thoughtful procession of students of the vaults and walls, and may know THEIR pilgrims too.

From end to end, the church is a delight to the eye; apse and transepts where they cross above the high altar are finest of all; everywhere is the deeply chorded harmony of red, blue, and gold, colors that symbolism made conventional, the red of Christ's blood and of his garments, the blue of

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heaven and of his mantle, and the gold of his crown. Now and then a clear white light comes through some door, and cuts upon this rich color, like the high voices of the boy choristers against organ tones. Perhaps the most fascinating effect is yielded by the ultramarine, that ultramarine which was sent to the friars as gift of a pious princess, a mediæval, vase-bearing Magdalen whose empty jar still stands upon an altar five hundred years after its contents have been spread over the walls. The greatest charm of these colors is in their duskiness, a certain dim splendor, the dulling added by the candles of fifteen votive generations, and by the accidents of time, for these lower wall frescoes have been rubbed by the armor of knights, the mantles of kings, and the goatskins of peasants.

The focal point of the under church pictorially, as well as architecturally, is the cross-vaulting above the high altar. Here, in four great lunettes, Saint Francis is glorified by Giotto, and on festa days by many hundred candles; Poverty and Obedience, Chastity and Humility, triumph with him. There are attributes in card-board towers; haloes, round, square, and hexagonal; angels, very busy in rewarding the good, confuting the unwise, and punishing the bad; a child throwing stones at Poverty; a centaur properly put in his right place by Prudence, who shows him that he does not belong in such

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fine company; curious and entertaining figures, sometimes toy-like, often dignified, but all making up a rich and admirable decoration under the wide low arches of this *crociera*, especially in the frescoes of Paupertas and Castitas. Some of the female figures, in spite of their uniformity, have great charm; and while all are gravely earnest, some are gravely sweet. Dante, as so often elsewhere, has collaborated here, bringing his actual personal presence to this first allotting of a task which generations of painters to come were to work out upon the walls of Italy, ever more skillfully wedding their "lovely music to immortal words," till the Stanze and the Sistine should close the cycle.

In the south transept are admirably simple frescoes attributed to Giovanni da Milano, whose figures are, like Giotto's elongated. Hard by, one of the early Orsini lies upon his tomb, and his pinched but charming face seems so out of place in his illustrious family of robber nobles, that one is not surprised at his choosing the church, but *does* wonder that he reached a cardinalate. Some of the glory of Giotto and Gaddi is reflected upon Lo Spagna's canvas of a Madonna with saints, or else it is really one of his very best, but what an anachronism is the *picture frame*, how artificial and unreasonable the cutting off and isolation pro-

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duced by this rectangle stuck about the picture, instead of the pinnacled setting of an early altarpiece or the painted border of a fresco. Close by on a lower wall of the transept under Cavallini's Crucifixion is a famous Madonna of Giotto, rich in color, impressive, lovely, and very much out of drawing. Compare it with the solemn Virgin of Giunta Pisano, not far from it. They are wholly different; with Giotto, we have the type of the thirteenth century, that type which smiled from the stone foliage of Rheims before Giotto was born, which prays under a veil and fights under a helmet, answering the needs of a whole age, and which is human and sympathetic. Cimabue's Virgin is like Giunta's, hardly human at all; she is no individual mother, but rather, under her low falling veil, a mother of mankind, a sort of mysterious Hindu goddess who has taken her slow way over the stepping stones of Persia and Byzantium and Cyprus, and sat down in this Italian church, still an Oriental.

One passes on from Giotto to Puccio Capanna, and to Simone Martini's chapel of the saint who emulated Saint Francis' generosity,— Saint Martin of Tours. These frescoes are among the best in the church; representative of the master; dainty with his usual delicate brodering of gold patterns and chasing of haloes; curious, too, with their touch of *trecento* archæology in the Roman armors, but in them

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the composition seems confused after the frescoes in the southern transept.

Indeed fresco follows fresco with such bewildering reduplication that one passes at last with some sense of relief to the change of impressions afforded by a small Campo Santo of sculptured monuments in a kind of atrium crossing the western end of the nave. Here upon these tombs are such romantically juxtaposed titles as only the crusading ages could show; of murdered dukes of Spoleto, of a royal monk who had worn the crown of Jerusalem and the knotted cord of Saint Francis, of a Lusignan whose queenship united the antique name of Cyprus to the Homeric name of Hecuba. Her sepulchre is as strange as her appellation: the queen's face, of the usual *trecento* type, and somewhat wooden, is twisted oddly awry; the angels who draw the draperies aside (this bit of bad taste appears in very early tombal sculpture) contort their wings like fluttering birds; while the royal daughter, who is seated above with one leg crossed high over the other in the most *gaillard* attitude ever seen on a tomb, appears only to lack her banjo, or, if you will, her lute. She is so unconventional and *débonnaire* as to appear accountable for the grimace and commotion of the queen and her attendant angels.

Nothing that can be written of the lower church of Assisi can give an adequate idea of its combi-



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nation of solemnity with unbounded variety and richness. Visitors to San Marco of Venice, or the basilicas of Ravenna, know what this means, but in Assisi mosaic is lacking, and the decorator, forced to depend upon pigment, draws from it magnificent results. There is not quite the depth of color yielded by the little glass tubes, and here Limoges enamel is the simile which comes constantly to the mind ; it is as if one stood in a vast copper reliquary covered with the blues and greens of the Limousin craftsmen.

A narrow staircase leads from the sacristy off the north transept to the upper church, which springs upward from the heavy arches of the lower one like a burst of harp music after the thunder of an organ. Even in Italy there is no such transition elsewhere. It is like the *Divine Comedy* built in stone ; pictured below with trials and purifications, and above, under its soaring arches, with the angels of Paradise. Only the *Inferno* is lacking, and rightly, for it had no place in the all-loving heart of Saint Francis.

It seems incredible that any pigment should so nearly approach the richness of mosaic, and the upper church of Assisi certainly equals any extant example of what fresco can do in pure decoration. Evidently not even a Gothic architect when here in central Italy could avoid building a church which

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should be, first of all, a preparation for the fresco-painter. The lines are long and soaring, but the narrow lancet windows take up but little space; the upper part of each bay is slightly recessed, and thus the lower portion of the nave wall is thrown forward, as if to offer a veritable parade ground for Giotto and his pupils, a real *scena* on which Saint Francis and his companions may enact the drama of their lives. Cimabue has the choir and north transept; Giunta the southern one; Cimabue again, with his pupils, the upper nave walls. Blue and green are the prevailing colors, as in the mosaics of Ravenna; a tawny orange is also present in large masses, and a warm Venetian red in much smaller quantities.

The Cimabues and Giuntas have suffered greatly, yet are delicious in color, and again in choir and transepts the walls seem as if made of Limoges work, such Limoges as one occasionally sees where the enamel has flaked away in parts from the copper, producing a rich medley of color. This medley is largely accidental; it is the fortunate handiwork of "Brother Rain." "Brother Rain," whom Francis loved as he did all things, is very active in Assisi for five months of the year; with "Brother Wind," who howled so fiercely around our little *albergo* on March nights, he roams the town and sweeps the mountain. More than once he has forced his way

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through the roof, and sent trickling messengers down among the saints and angels. But when the impulse has passed, he has been ashamed of his depredations upon the house of the gentle Saint Francis, and has tried to at least temper the mischief by turning the blues he has touched to most lovely greens that run from turquoise to emerald, and render the beautiful church more beautiful. Photographs have made the lower nave frescoes familiar friends; they were probably planned and partly executed by Giotto, but it is perilous work painting poetry, especially the poetry of the Fioretti; yet if the result is sometimes trivial, it is often dignified, falling below the frescoes of Padua and the lower church, but affording interest, entertainment, and sometimes great pleasure. There are subjects of all kinds, — preachments, investitures, and above all visions, visions of all sorts, from the sublime to the puerile. There has been endless pasture here for Ruskin and Rio and Lord Lindsay, room too for those who pursue the investigations disdained by the soul-seekers. These researches place many, indeed most of the frescoes upon a doubtful basis as to authenticity and prove only the strong and ever present influence, first, of Cimabue, then, of his greater pupil. The frescoes on the upper wall ascribed to the former master, representing the life of Noah, have a wild force that is western, yet suggests the

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Oriental, and one seems to see always in their backgrounds Athos instead of Ararat. A painter was at work away up among them upon a tower which reached the vaulting above, and rolled upon wheels below like some such "city-taker," as we read of in classical authors. He came down and talked with us, and said that he should only restore flat tints, and fill in outlines, but this little word "outlines" made us very thoughtful; fancy any one "restoring" Giotto's outlines where faint and even partly erased! One almost wished the tower *was* a city-taker, and that one might have the enemy's privilege of shooting the artist before he had done another day's restoration; such violence would have found no little stimulus in our memories of the Pisan Campo Santo, and not only of "outlines" there, but of "flat tints" as well. One must be careful, however, about wholesale condemnation of restoration; some of it is intelligent, viz.: that which removes, not that which adds.

Day after day, at early morning, at noon, and at sunset, we saw the church again and again, and the impression never left us that it afforded the richest example we had ever seen of fresco color applied to ecclesiastical architecture.

## IV

ASSISAN inhabitants, mediæval or modern, at first appear quite superfluous. There seems no room for them, after one has thought of Saint Francis and Saint Clara, for the memory of them fills the town. But Dante and Giotto, as visitors to be sure, were noteworthy enough; and gradually one thinks of those gentlemen of quality who rode away with Saint Francis for the wars which he never reached; of the bishop who set him in the ranks, to him more militant than those of the crusaders; of the priest whose tiny chapel he restored, begging and building at once, and of the many others who figure in the painted drama of the church. That the town existed before Francis came to give it interest, Minerva's columns testify; that it has existed since, through successive centuries, is proved by a few typical Italian palaces, palaces which must be surprised enough that their masters should have elected to build them here.

Some one among these palace-masters there must have been who thought the town worth holding for there is a *rocca* high upon the hill above. It is a stately castle enough; but, like most Italian *rocche*, seems a bit thin of wall and card-board-like to one



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who has in mind the memory of Couci or Château Gaillard. Nevertheless, seen through the framework of the open door to the upper church, with the tender greensward of early spring before it, and the snow slopes of Mount Subasio behind, the Castello is not a little effective and beautiful. The town, but for its sanctuary, is forlorn, mournful, and poverty-stricken. The haggard figure who brings her hollow cheeks and her rags as wedding portion upon the vaulting above the high altar of Francis, has made the town her own, but with the ownership has come little of the cheerfulness of the all loving saint. Not a trowel has been put to brick for three centuries, one would say. The houses look old, bleak, and desolate ; is there anything except stone within them ? Are there any beds there or linen or tables spread comfortably with white cloths for ever so humble a meal ? May one lie softly or sit warmly there, or find anything save shelter from rain ? Did any one ever build a fire in them ? It all looks flinty, like the bed of the saint himself ; the windows gape in sashless indifference to winter, and we saw many doors just wide and high enough to admit a man, suggestive of a time when a narrow opening was easier to defend than a wide one. There are frescoes here and there, many Gothic arches, and in its climbing streets Assisi is like a poor relation of Perugia. On its grand square (as well ask

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an Italian to breathe without lungs as even the smallest mediæval burg of the peninsula to be without its grand square) are one or two heavy looking palaces, like exiles from some happier town, mouldering in dead Assisi, and on the grand piazza, by the side of a tall and sturdy tower, are six slender, fluted columns and a pediment. This temple has been a high-water mark of fashion in æsthetics; to it Goethe climbed, and from it he returned to the valley, disdaining to dilute his impressions by a visit to the sanctuary of Saint Francis!

*Che, che*, Messer Wolfgang! there are many better temples, but where is there a better church of its kind. Assisi is the city of the saint, not of the goddess. Those, however, were the days of Winckelmann and Lessing, of the Medicean Venus and the Laocöon, and he who would build an Iphigenia in Aulis cared greatly for the templework of even the latest descendants of Trojan Æneas. But Italy is full of such marriages of Faustus and Helena, where antiquity and the middle ages stand hand in hand, and the Renaissance blooms at their side. Goethe saw plenty of such juxtapositions afterwards of tower and temple and church, and no one who remembers his love of Strasburg spire will believe that he would have stood unmoved had he once entered the lower church of Saint Francis.

For our part, if we had to find a goddess to build

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for in Assisi, our temple should be under the invocation of her who was “ *Clara nomine, vita clarior, clarissima moribus.*”

We may see her to-day, this Saint Clara, who was the beloved disciple and friend of Saint Francis, and to whom he went for help and sympathy during his sorest trials. Her church with its lofty tower and its gay red-and-white stripes — over-gay for so austere a saint — lies close to the gate, and the road passes beneath a huge buttress. Here, though her true home was at San Damiano, the convent outside the walls, her embalmed body is shown by a rosy young sister in the habit of the Poor Clares.

You descend a flight of steps into the darkness of a crypt, and stand among the brilliant marbles of Monte Subasio, and look into a vague, dusky mirror in which glints of gold are seen. Presently a ghost-like something moves across its inner surface, and the startled perceptions have hardly recognized a tall, white nun's cap, when candles grow into a dim flame, and a vision forms itself of a profile darkly silhouetted against light, — of a low brow, strongly set lips, and a full round chin, of a reclining figure in the brown Franciscan habit, girt with a knotted cord. Is this the face of an ascetic? Unless the flickering light plays strange tricks, the lines of this mummied profile show wilfulness and passion, strength of purpose and of emotion. And were they

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lacking in the girl, young, beautiful, and rich, who left her father's house by stealth, to join the little group of holy madmen, who persisted in her purpose, in spite of every kind of opposition, and finally counted her own mother and sister among her nuns at San Damiano? Was she wanting in fire and energy when the Saracens scaled the walls of her convent, and she repulsed them, pyx in hand; the marauders hurrying away from the sight of a gaunt, terrible figure which brandished a strange talisman and called down curses on them in an unknown tongue? Was she poor in will and force, this friend of Saint Francis who for many years after his death, indeed until her own, defended against the Pope himself the "Rule" of her dear master, that "Rule" of 1221 which devoted the Franciscans to the Holy Poverty their founder so loved?

This is no relic revealed by dream or miracle centuries after the death of the sainted one, and conveniently discovered at some time of need; it is the real body of the girl, Chiara della Scifa, who was living in this same town when crusaders were still harboring here on their way through the mountain passes to Ancona and Palestine. These lips talked with Saint Francis, and on one fourth of October, six hundred and seventy-six years ago, kissed his dead hand as his body was borne past

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her in San Damiano by shouting Assisians, rejoicing unseasonably that the relic was theirs at last and forever.

Saint Francis's pilgrims find most of their holy places outside the walls of the town. The churches of Assisi are commemorative only, but the convent of San Damiano, the little cell enclosed in the cold splendors of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the hermitage of San Francesco delle Carcere, and the monastery of Rio Torto, are filled with his spiritual presence. In his actual environment, seeing his stone bed, the cave where he dwelt *povero e lieto*, the crucifix to which he prayed, the wooden pillow on which he laid his head, the rose-thickets that tore his poor, emaciated body, the trees wherein the doves he blessed nested, and brooded; these actual things which he touched and saw and loved seemed to vivify the memory of him until the past became the contemporaneous.

The memory of the saint is closely knit to the souvenir of that little group of friends and disciples who were faithful to him in life and death, who clung to his "Rule," and endeavored to realize his ideal of the religious life; Fra Leone, his "*Pecorello di Dio*," whose biography of his beloved master, written only a few months after Saint Francis's death, is the most intimate and personal record of him which we possess; Egidio and Ruffino and



FLORENCE

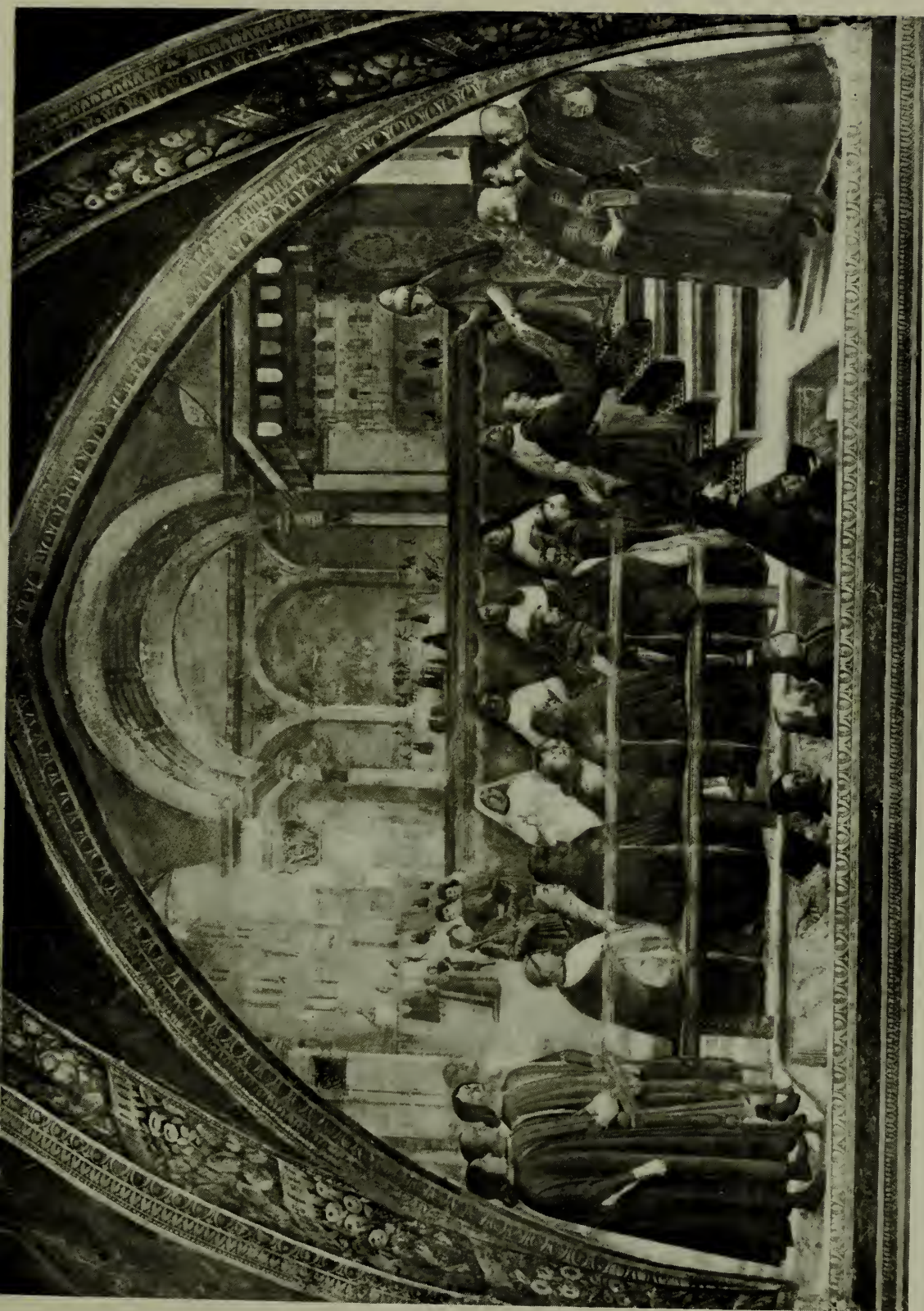
SANTISSIMA TRINITÀ

GHIRLANDAJO

THE INSTITUTION OF THE ORDER OF SAINT FRANCIS











## ASSISI

Angelo, "the three Companions," and Bernardo da Quintavalle, the rich proprietor of Assisi, the saint's first convert. Then there were Fra Masseo, the good simpleton, who was so enraptured by the thought of the divine love that he could only coo like a wood pigeon; the converted troubadour and "king of verses," Fra Pacifico; Brother Juniper, the comic personage, and *enfant terrible* of the group, and many others, knights, gentlemen, and contadini, all united by love and adoration for Saint Francis.

Nor was his friendship confined to companions of his own sex; like his divine Master, he inspired and returned the affection of good women. He turned to Saint Clara for counsel and help in all the crises of his career; after his death, his disciples accounted her his dearest friend; and it was to her that Fra Leone sent his personal souvenirs of Saint Francis to be kept until more auspicious times. The "Rule" which Saint Francis made for the poor Clares, lost for centuries, was found quite recently in the clothing of Saint Clara. Before his last visit to Riete the saint, already infirm in body, was carried to San Damiano to see her for the last time.

When dying, he sent for his dear "Brother," Giacobba di Settesoli, a lady of the noble house of the Frangipani, and broke the rules of the cloister in allowing her to visit him on his death-



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bed. Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventura were a little shocked by the innocent freedom of Saint Francis, and by his frank demonstrations of affection for this lady, who, in 1226, though a widow, was still young, but Fra Leone finds them perfectly natural, and recounts the incident with his usual tranquil simplicity. The layman, of course, sees only in this absence of monastic prudery another proof of *il Poverello's* angelic candor. After his death, the little following of friends clung to each other for comfort and support, and to the town in which he was buried.

So haunting is his memory, so completely does he still possess the place, that as we leave Assisi and descend the hill for the last time, it is easy to fancy that something of his personality still remains, and to picture the slight figure of a thin, dark young man, with delicate, worn features, fiery eyes, a trifle dimmed by weeping, and long wasted hands. This is the dusty road where he so often walked, singing with Brother Egidio, and admonished the folk by the way, saying, in his "sweet yet thrilling voice": "O, love and serve God, and repent perfectly of your sins." And the pilgrim to Assisi who has dwelt for some little space with this sweetest of all saints will add, with childlike Brother Egidio: "Do what my spiritual father says to you, for he always says what is best."

# RAPHAEL IN ROME



# RAPHAEL IN ROME

## I

IN the years which began the sixteenth century, the art of Italy attained its meridian in its capital city and in the house of its supreme rulers, through the painting of the Stanze and the Sistine chapel. There has never in the history of art been a *milieu* more favorable and more trying. On the one hand, enthusiasm had reached the very highest point, the tree nurtured painfully, lovingly by the banks of the Arno was ready to bear fruit; in the Vatican had just been enthroned a pope who willed tyrannously that his ideal should be attained, the ideal of an environment unsurpassed in beauty and inspiration by anything which the world had seen.

On the other hand, all the art of Florence, the art which was an inheritance from Giotto and Donatello, Masaccio and Lippo, and which was actually in the hands of Botticelli, Perugino, and Signorelli was ready to pour, bubbling at the point of its highest enthusiasm, into the channel of Papal service. Great artists stood clustered about the throne: Giuliano da Sangallo, founder of a dynasty of archi-

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fects, Bramante, to whom had been allotted the planning of the greatest church in Christendom, humanists and poets and cardinals who were more famous as collectors than as temporal princes. Luca Signorelli and Pietro Perugino were still upon their scaffolding of the Sistine chapel; the young Michelangelo was already preparing his drawings, and soon would thunder and lighten from the vaulting. To conquer in such company was to conquer utterly; Raphael Sanzio was summoned from Florence by Pope Julius, and within a short space of time three peers, Bramante, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as if so many counterparts of the triple ranges of their master's tiara, crowned the art of the Revival in the Eternal City.

Raphael's conquest of his surroundings was almost magical; he arrived a youth, well-spoken of as to skill, yet by reputation hardly even *par inter pares*; in ten short years, how long if we count them as art-history, he died, having painted the Vatican, the Farnesina, world-famous altar-pieces, having planned the restoration of the entire urbs, having reconciled enemies and stimulated friends, and having succeeded without being hated.

He achieved this success by his great and manifold capacity, but, most of all, because in art he was the greatest assimilator and composer who ever lived. The two words are each other's complements; he



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received impressions, and he put them together; his temperament was exactly suited to this marvellous forcing-house of Rome, for a Roman school never really existed, it was simply the Tusco-Umbrian school throned upon seven hills and growing grander and freer in the contemplation of Antiquity.

To this contemplation, Raphael brought not only a brilliant endowment but an astonishing mental accumulation; the mild eyes of the Uffizi portrait were piercing when they looked upon nature or upon art, and behind them was an alembic in which the things that entered through those eyes fused, precipitated, or crystallized as he willed.

While yet a lad, and fresh from the teaching of Timoteo Viti, he had looked with Perugino upon the Umbrian landscape, perhaps the noblest in Italy; he had seen Pietro frame his figures in its depths of golden serenity, and in those figures he had studied sweetness and sentiment, sentiment which, better than his master, he could withhold from lapsing into sentimentality. Later he vibrated to the note sounded by a mightier master, and the somewhat sheeplike sweetness of his Peruginesque Madonnas grew more subtly sweet, more humanly expressive. Usually Raphael bettered his instruction, but no one has ever refined upon either the subtlety or the capacity for expression of Leonardo da Vinci. New compositional combinations, too, he learned from

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Leonardo, and here it needed but a hint, a touch, and Raphael could go on embroidering forever, ringing all the changes possible to his three-figure composition of Madonna, the Christ-child, and the Baptist.

With equal responsiveness, he answered to the influence of his friend and comrade Fra Bartolommeo, feeling at once the importance of the monumental grouping which the Frate was bringing as his contribution to the succession of the school, feeling it at once and applying it as soon as felt in his own fresco of San Severo in Perugia, a work modelled upon Bartolommeo's Judgment, and to become in turn the model for his own Disputa.

He must have gone, like all others, to the great hall and seen there the cartoon of Michelangelo, young, almost as himself, yet who in that cartoon drew the human body as none had drawn it since the Greeks, and, to Raphael who was to be himself past-master of composition, this Battle of Pisa (as well as the Battle of Anghiari hard by it) must have said ten thousand things. He had copied in the Carmine, and the lad Masaccio, who died young, poor, almost unknown, contributed to the man who died young and world-famous, at least one figure, the Saint Paul, which, studied and remembered, was transferred years later from Raphael's portfolio to the cartoon that we see in South Kensington

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Museum to-day. He had gone up and down the streets of Florence, and into her palaces and churches, he had read her pictured thought upon the walls, and at Mariotto's tavern had talked with those who evolved that thought, with Filippino and Botticelli, with the young Michelangelo and the old Andrea della Robbia. At least, we must believe that he had done all this, for he was in the midst of these men, well liked and eager to receive; he had not only looked, he had worked upon canvases which the Museums of the world have disputed: Madonnas in long succession, del Cardellino, del Gran Duca, dei Canigiani, del Baldacchino, the Resurrection, the Coronation, the Borghese Entombment, and these pictures were better credentials than was the letter which Giovanna of Urbino sent him.

## II

VASARI says that Raphael was summoned to Rome by the advice of Bramante, and this is more likely to be true than not; his achievements alone would not have sufficed but Urbino was strong at the court of Rome, because of Julius's personal relations and ambitions and more still, as far as an artist's recommendation was concerned, through the great reputation and position of the Urbinate architect.

At sometime in the year 1509 Raphael began to paint in the Sala della Segnatura; the task was as difficult a one as could be found; he had not only to prove that technically he could surpass his predecessors in these rooms, but also to symbolize to the satisfaction of Pope and poets and learned men the greatest divisions of human thought. The intellectual scheme of his decoration was given him without doubt, but that scheme he must needs body forth in concrete form and clearly. So much for one set of limitations. Another was that consisting in the material limitation of the room, which was a rectangular space with two unbroken walls, lunette shaped, and lighted from two sides, and two walls pierced by windows. The floor was covered by a tessellated pavement.

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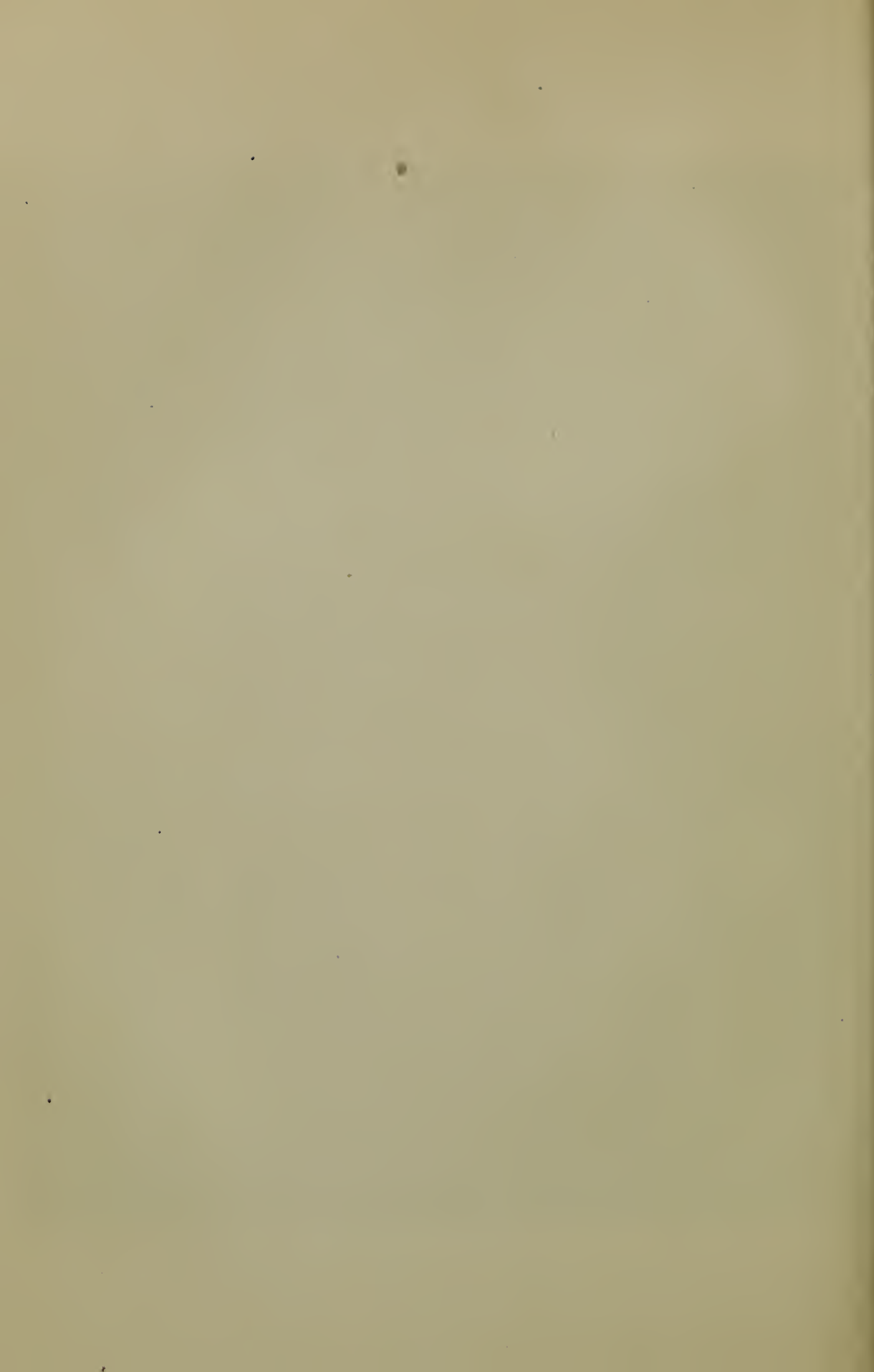
INTERIOR OF THE SALA DELLA SEGNATURA











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Raphael began with the roof, the vaulting ; why, we do not know. There were certain obvious advantages of a practical character in such a procedure ; once the vaulting was finished, there was no danger of splashing the work upon the lower walls, also the scaffolding could be progressively lowered. These advantages, however, seem of little importance in comparison with the desirability of painting the principal and dominating subjects first, the subsidiary ones afterwards. Sodoma had already covered the vaulting of the Sala with a decorative scheme consisting of four medallions, four rectangles, very small subordinate panels, a central medallion about an escutcheon, and an ornamental framing enclosing all. The frame, or borderings, and the smallest panels, Raphael preserved. The compositions in the four medallions and the rectangles, he caused to be obliterated.

It may be that the new plaster showing in dazzling spots in the midst of the painted frame annoyed the artist so much that he preferred to cover it first of all. This annoyance might, of course, have been obviated by leaving the whole earlier ceiling decoration in place till one of his own great frescoes of the side walls was finished, and became a key-note to the room ; but in this case again the presence of another artist's work in so large a mass and close to his own would have been



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a disturbing influence as to both scale and color. Raphael was embarked upon a critical enterprise, and one quite new to him; it is probable, therefore, that he would take no risks; at all events, he cleared away the main portion of Sodoma's work and began himself upon that rectangle in the vaulting which he filled with the figure of a girl leaning over a sphere and symbolizing the Creation of the Heavenly Bodies; the three other rectangles, The Judgment of Solomon, The Temptation, and Apollo, followed, and then the four medallions.

Of these beautiful medallions, the Poetry and the Justice are at once the more powerful and the more graceful. They are better drawn and composed than the other two. In the Theology, the face is neither handsome nor well drawn; the shoulders have a cramped look, the drapery over the knees is clumsy. In the Philosophy, the uprights to the throne jar slightly, interfering with the sweeping rotundity of composition found in the other three medallions, and especially in two of them; the disposition of the tablets and the square of the book is also less happy than usual; while in the head, the skull is disproportionately small at the top in relation to the face (it must be admitted that this disproportion holds in some degree in all four of the medallions). The Poetry and the Justice are entirely admirable in composition, and in their filling of space



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are superb, while the Theology and Philosophy, when seen as parts of the ceiling, are much finer than if considered in detail. Raphael here seems to have prescribed the composition of the decorative medallion to all time: a central figure with attendant putti or genii; other artists before him had closely approached the motive, but he made it his own, and to-day when in a pendentive a circle with a diameter of six feet or so presents itself, the souvenir of Raphael's women of the Sala della Segnatura is tyrannous.

The rectangles contain admirable figures, — the two women of the Judgment, the figure with the back turned in the Marsyas; the Apollo on the other hand is unbeautiful, rather clumsy, indeed, and there is, as in many places in the ceiling, a certain coarseness of handling, probably resulting from restoration of draperies and portions of the flesh painting, which latter however remains, on the whole, tolerably free from retouching. Nevertheless, the ensemble is superb, and is the ultimate and developed expression of a time-honored arrangement in which four medallions with subsidiary subjects or ornaments fill the vaulting of a rectangular room or chapel.

Raphael now came to his first vast problem, — the painting upon an arch-topped wall of a subject in which the mystical relation of man to his Redeemer.

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through the Communion, should be discussed in the presence of the Trinity, the Patriarchs, and Apostles, by a company of sainted popes, cardinals and bishops, and by doctors, angelic and seraphic.

First of all, Raphael required a fine arrangement, and he found one which yielded a noble *pattern*. A truly decorative arrangement is one which shall decorously fill and fit a certain circumscribing architectural form; its pattern is therefore of enormous importance, and a good decoration should not only look well as placed, but should be handsome also as a pattern, even if turned upside down so that all sense of drawing in individual figures is lost. In the case of the Disputà, the circumscribing form was a semicircle; within this Raphael has placed the two main ranges of figures; Christ, Mary, and the Baptist, enclosed in a round-topped glory, make up a domical mass re-echoing the general arch of the lunette; the line of patriarchs and apostles curves gently up at the ends, agreeably contradicting the said general arch, while the mass of figures on the earth below bends still more gently downward at left and right, in opposition to the upper line and as a second broader and more delicate echo of the lunette's top, while long marble steps repeat the straight base line of the picture, and make a pedestal to the whole. There are, as it were, two keystones to the composition, — one in the upper group, the

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GROUP FROM THE DISPUTA

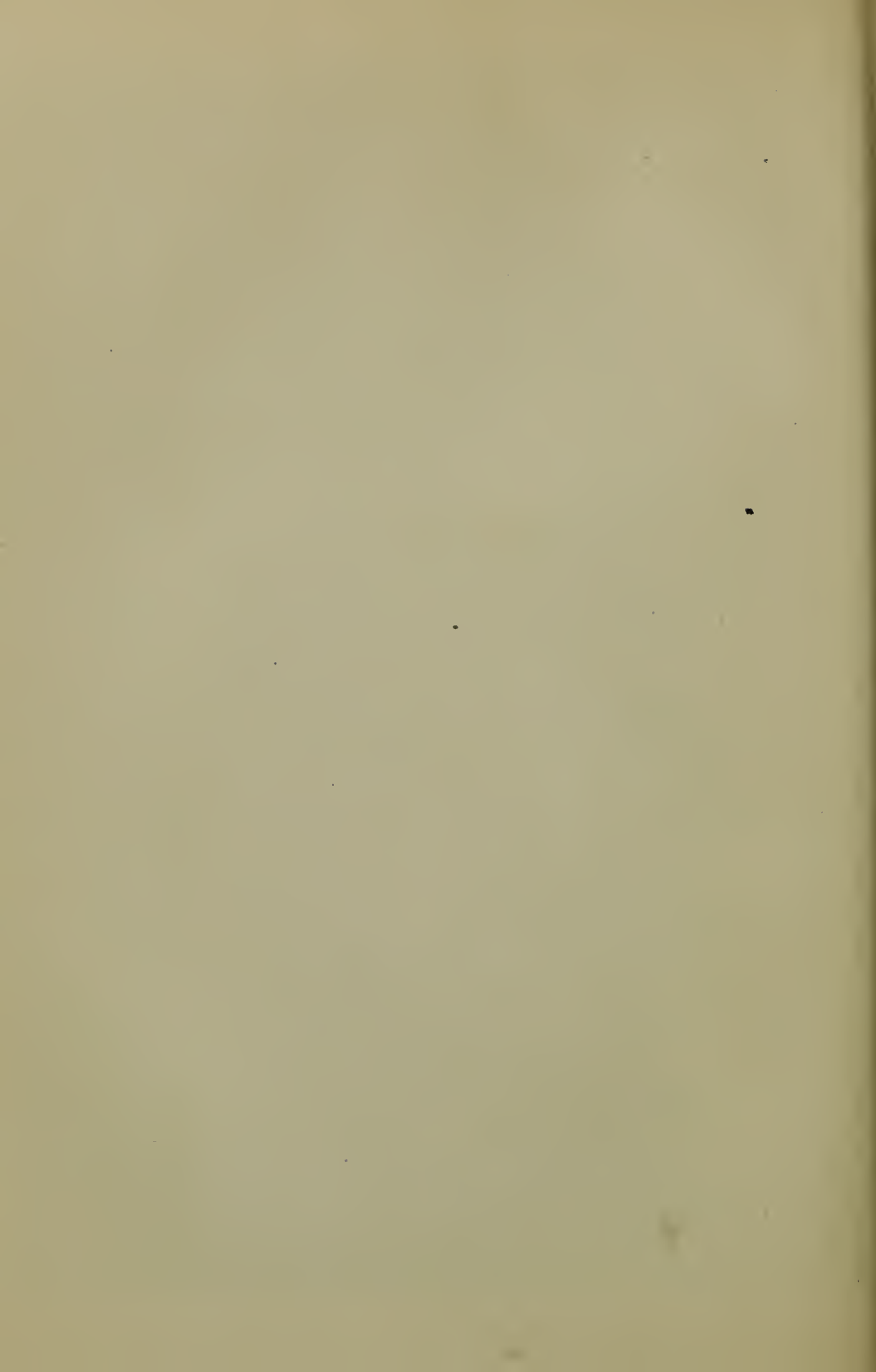












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round-topped glory, one in the lower group, the altar ; while the curves from the top of the picture to the ends of the upper group, curves which would be a little too long to remain empty, are broken with small groups of flying angels. Exactly in the axis of the picture is a circle enclosing the dove of the Holy Spirit, equidistant between what we have called the two keystones and connecting them.

This, then, is the composition of masses and of main lines in the *Disputà*, Raphael's first serious essay in monumental decoration, since he never completed the fresco of San Severo. It is immensely individual and Raphaellesque, and yet its genesis is easily found; one has but to go first to the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence to see the Judgment painted there by Fra Bartolommeo, and then to follow the young Raphael in his excursions to those early Christian basilicas of Rome whose apses glittered with saints and symbols. Few things can be more inspiring to the decorator than their grand curves, and we can see that Raphael apprehended the value of mosaic as a ground, since he at once suggested its effect in the medallions of Poetry, and her companions of the vaulting. The composition of the *Disputà*, for all its formalness, indeed, because of its formalness, is splendidly successful. The figures in the School of Athens are grander and riper, and its architecture adds to its

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impressiveness ; but as decorative patterns, the Disputà and the Mass of Bolsena remain the two finest works in the Vatican.

The responsiveness of Raphael to the influence of surroundings is nowhere more delightful to witness than in this early part of his Roman sojourn. We can see him growing like a flower, almost from month to month, and can, as it were, walk through the Disputà and School of Athens, noting the gradual expansion of his style. In the thoroughly traditional part of the Disputà, the figures of the enthroned Christ and Mary, he is Perugian, and even poor and feeble in his rendering of the features of the Saviour ; his flying angels, on the other hand, have an Umbrian sweetness, but with a graceful power which is all Raphael's own. The cherubs flying around the dove are inspired by Fra Bartolommeo ; while the figures of the bishops and saints immediately about the altar, although the work of one who has profited by the example of Leonardo, are already entirely Raphaelesque, and are admirable and immediate precursors of the figures in the School of Athens.

Raphael had justified Bramante by a brilliant success, and this justification must have been not a little important to both painter and architect. Michelangelo, famous already for his Pietà, the equal of which, save at the hands of Donatello, had

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not been seen since the Greeks, and which, coming from a man but twenty-eight years old, must have appeared miraculous, was the warm partisan of his Florentine fellow-townsmen Giuliano da Sangallo, who was, in turn, the only man whom Bramante could dread as a possible rival in the task, coveted by all Italians, of building St. Peter's.

The Urbinate, strong as he was, had felt the need of strengthening himself still further by acquiring the friendship of other artists, and creating a kind of little court. We are told that almost nightly at his table there met Luca Signorelli, Pietro Perugino, Baldassarre Peruzzi, Giovanantonio Bazzi, and Lorenzo Lotto. What an age! when a single supper party could furnish forth such an assemblage of world-famous artists, who in turn, as they went from their quarters in the Borgo Vecchio, might meet Michelangelo returning from the Vatican with the contingent of Florentines, Bugiardini, Granacci, Aristotile da Sangallo, and l'Indaco, who were helping him in the Sistine Chapel.

Pope Julius was the man for great enterprises, in whatever he undertook, whether in art or war, and the potentialities of the moment were such as might well encourage enthusiasm. Imagine an individual to whom came, out of the earth of his own city, such treasure trove as the Belvedere Apollo and the Laocöon; no wonder he determined to house them

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well, and planned hopefully to dig in this vineyard that might yield fruit of world's masterpieces. He had long meant to lie some day in the mightiest tomb ever dreamed of by a pontiff, and had set Michelangelo to work, but the work dragged, men told him that the project was unlucky, and at last the mausoleum was abandoned, and the new idea grew in its place, that he, Julius, would build the church of the world. In the old Basilica of St. Peter's, with bell and book and acolytes, he went down into the pit that had been dug, and laid the cornerstone of the new building.

The mausoleum, with its dozens of statues, was to have been erected in the old basilica, now condemned to demolition. Who could tell when the new building would be ready to afford foundations even, for the tomb, to say nothing of adequate shelter? So that matters having come to a standstill, the pope's sculptor was available for other work, and Julius, having renounced a project dear to his heart, cast about for one sufficiently vast to take its place worthily. The man who once had leaped from his mule, and with his own hands had loosed the chains and helped raise the drawbridge to cut off his pursuing enemies, was not one to hesitate in an emergency. He balked at nothing; he had been obliged against his will to cry halt to Michelangelo in the greatest sculptural enterprise



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of his time ; he would set him instead the greatest pictorial problem. His sculptor should become painter, and should complete the decoration of the central chapel of Christendom, the Sistine.

Every bit of artistic news must have been eagerly discussed at Bramante's table, and even the finding of a Laocoön would pale before such a sensation as this. If Michelangelo succeeded, what enormous prestige would accrue to Sangallo through the success. The possibility was well calculated to set Bramante to thinking, and he thought of Raphael Sanzio, a fellow-townsmen of Urbino, whose interests would naturally march with his compatriot's and whose triumphs, if he obtained them, would redound to the glory of himself, Bramante.

There were chances in favor of Raphael ; neither artist could pretend to be an accomplished *frescante*. The Urbinate, save at San Severo, had not handled the material since he was Perugino's apprentice, some eight or nine years before. Buonarroti had not used it since he worked with Ghirlandajo in the choir of Santa Maria Novella of Florence ; but Raphael was a painter, and already the most promising painter of all who "employed the new manner," and had left the school of Botticelli and Perugino behind them. Michelangelo was not a painter at all, but a sculptor ; he might be undone by this new problem, yet who could say that any-

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thing was impossible to the man who had drawn those figures of bathers and climbers in the great hall of the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio?

Vasari has involved the history of this first rivalry of Raphael and Michelangelo, for rivalry it was, whether generous or bitter, in considerable obscurity. In the life of Buonarroti he says that Bramante urged the pope to have Michelangelo paint the Sistine, because he wished to diminish the glory of the sculptor by giving him unfamiliar work in which he would fail. In the life of Giuliano da Sangallo, the Aretine biographer says exactly the contrary, namely, that Sangallo begged Julius to let his warm friend and partisan Michelangelo paint the vaulting. In choosing between these two statements, we must support the latter by Pietro Roselli's letter of May 10, 1506, to Michelangelo, which says that Bramante was doing all he could to shake the pope's confidence in him as a painter; and we must value this contemporaneous statement more than the words of Vasari, who, though a personal friend of Michelangelo, wrote nearly half a century later, when the sculptor was an old man, and Raphael had been dead for thirty years, and who, into the bargain, contradicted himself diametrically, as we have seen.

Furthermore, it seems preposterous that Bramante, who had strengthened himself by the support of

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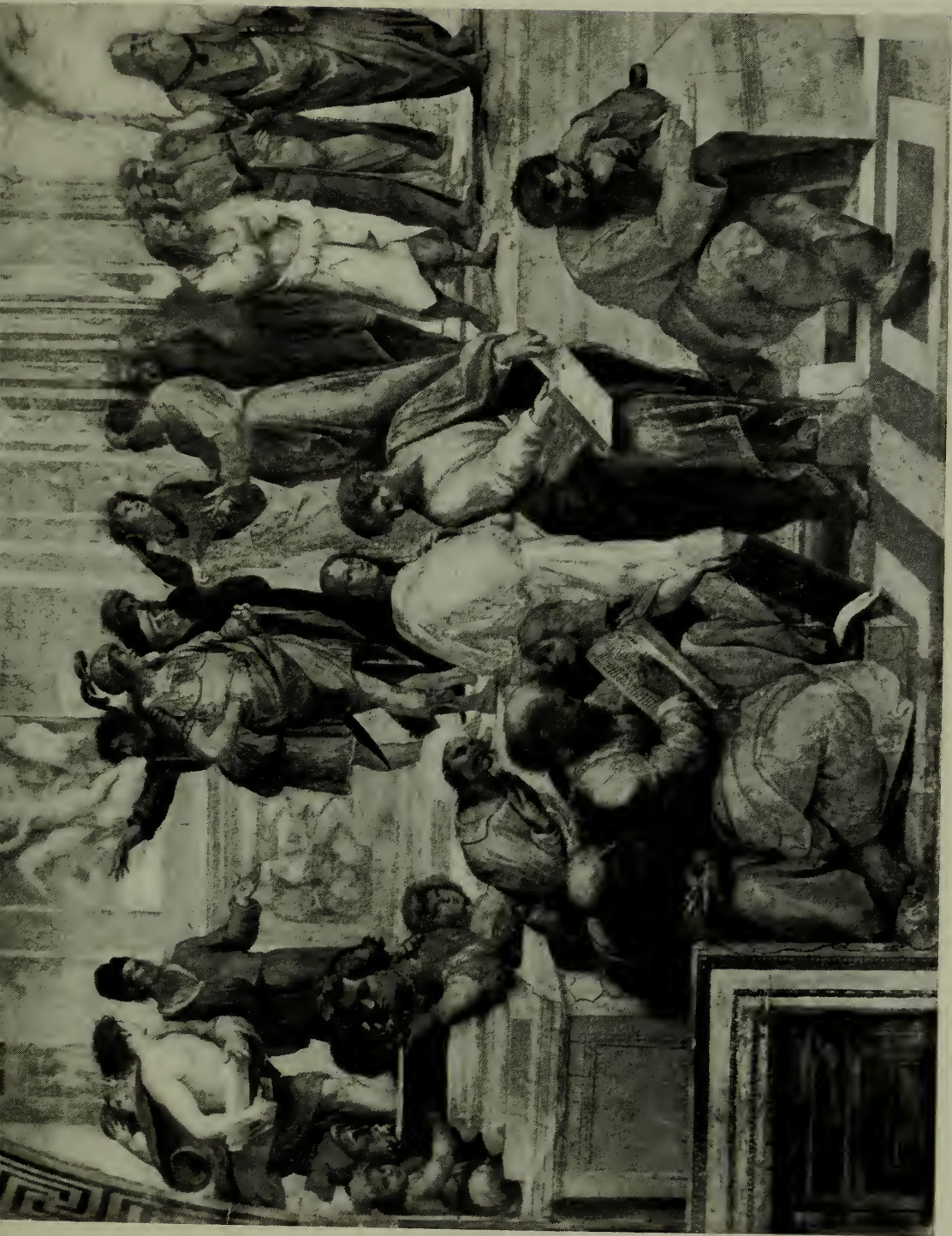
RAPHAEL SANZIO

GROUP FROM THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS













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the painters, should have deliberately tried to throw into the hands of a sculptor, the greatest pictorial opportunity which the age afforded. We are told elsewhere that he tried to obtain the painting of the Sistine vaulting for Raphael; this would be probable. It is added that Michelangelo also favored the young Urbinate; this, though less likely, is not impossible, for the difficulty of the task was quite in proportion to the honor, and Buonarroti, though not a man to be dismayed by the greatness of any task whatsoever, may well have at once dreaded the technical preparation required, and much more the renunciation of his chisel for so long a period. He may have felt that he was to expend time doubtfully, where he might expend it with a certainty of achievement; for "with sublime modesty," he wrote to his father on January 27, 1509, "Because such work is not my profession, I am losing my time uselessly, God help me!" However it all may have been, when Raphael arrived everything was settled, Julius had had his way, Michelangelo had commenced in the Sistine, and Raphael was given the Camera della Segnatura to try his hand on.

The second great fresco of this Camera, the so-called School of Athens, is perhaps the most famous single achievement of the artist, and in it the expansion of his methods is noticeable indeed. We

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find no more embossing, no introduction of raised and gilded rays, no modelling of surface in gypsum. Here are no conventional figures such as the Christ of the Disputà, all is freer and larger; these figures are purely Raphaelesque. They are the product of the artist's own personality acted upon at one and the same moment by the influence of Michelangelo in his cartoon of Florence, and the influence of antique masterpieces, seen now for the first time by Raphael in his daily walks. The figures are not perfectly correct examples of draughtsmanship; but they are better, they are noble examples, admirable at once for force and grace, and superbly composed. It may be said that in the Stanza of the Segnatura this fresco marks the point where Raphael has thought most about his individual figures; he has thought enormously, too, about his ensemble and their relations to it, but he has considered his people individually with equal thought. In the Disputà, he apparently sought and experimented even more, but he was less free, because, as yet, less exercised and developed; while in the Parnassus, he was either hurried or less fortunate, and did not show the same sureness of eye or hand in proportion, drawing, and composition.

The composition of the School of Athens, academic through its communicated sense of great pre-occupation, is, nevertheless grand, and owes not a

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little to Raphael's feeling for space, and the magnificent architectural motive furnished probably by Bramante. In nearly all the frescoes of the various Stanze Raphael has noted the fact that the great circumscribing curve of the lunette's top is an exacting factor in his effect, and has both echoed and contradicted it in such manner as to enhance his pattern of lines and masses ; here his echo is found in three great arches receding one behind the other to a point of sight in the middle of the picture ; against this point of sight, and framed by the last arch, the figures of Plato and Aristotle stand side by side ; from them, to right and left, the figures making up the action drop gently downward in grouped masses to the lower corners. The uprights of the architecture and two colossal statues help to hold up the composition ; while the pier-cornices, in severe perspective, yield a sort of thrust and contradiction to the lunette arch. The dignity of this ordering has not been excelled. Large words are not out of place in writing of it, for largeness is its prevailing characteristic, and the result of Raphael's thought and labor was the creation of a monumental fresco which has been more studied, copied, imitated, and described than any other in the history of art.

The Jurisprudence above the windows at one side of the room contains but three figures of women, Prudence, Force, and Moderation, with attendant

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putti ; there is no architectural motive, unless it be a simple marble bench, and yet, save that the subject did not call for such sustained effort, this fresco is entitled to the praise bestowed upon the School of Athens. In its amplitude, its rhythmic flow, its filling of space, its echoing of circumscribing forms, it is an absolutely perfect decoration. The face of the superb Force is neither correctly drawn nor very handsome ; nor can the features of the Moderation be greatly praised ; nevertheless, in their general character, the figures may stand for Raphael at his very highest point as decorator.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle, in their invaluable book "The Life and Works of Raphael," say that the Parnassus is not less admirable for distribution and execution than the School of Athens ; to us it appears much less excellent than any one of the three other frescoes in the room. The pattern of the whole fresco is pleasing, but the right-hand side of it, from the centre to the lower corner, presents the poorest piece of composition in the entire Camera della Segnatura. The figures seem almost thrown together, if you compare them with the carefully balanced grouping in the School of Athens ; for instance, the three muses above and behind Erato are, for Raphael, combined with singularly little grace, and there are serious faults of scale, Urania, the figure with her back turned, being much too big, as



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GROUP FROM THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS











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is also Melpomene, whose head is disproportionately large. Several of the muses have less of style than is usually found in Raphael's work, and we again observe unpleasantly large faces and the cramped shoulders upon Melpomene and Urania, which we have seen before in one or two of the vaulting medallions. The exaggerations of fashion are often accountable in part, for unpleasing peculiarities in an artist's work, and in this case the fifteenth century habit of cultivating a high forehead, even of depilating it, and of wearing dresses which appeared to be slipping from the shoulders, may be noted as the exaggerations aforesaid.

Two causes may have helped to make the Parnassus fall behind the other frescoes; first, many portraits of poets, some of them contemporaries, were introduced, and the tendency of the sitter to turn his face towards the spectator was not helpful to the composer of the picture; secondly, the Parnassus seems to have been painted last of all the frescoes in the room, and it is like enough that some emergency occurred, some function was imminent, calling for the clearing away of the scaffolds and the hurried completion of the work. When all reserves are made, the Parnassus contains noble figures and shows plainly that it was produced during Raphael's best period.

In the consideration of the ancient masters, there



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is no factor of their work which bewilders one as does the factor of color. It is not too much to say that in the case of many famous oil paintings we do not know what the master's original color intention was at all. Often it has been utterly denaturalized by the restorer, and where that incendiary person has let the work alone, chemical change has sometimes proved almost as harmful as he would have been, but never quite as harmful. Chemical change has done some dreadful things, and a certain blue pigment ran amuck through Italian art, especially in the pictures of Tintoretto and Veronese. But chemical change had its limitations, there was no animus in it, whereas the restorer imposed his own personality (what there was of it) upon that of the work which he attacked. We do not refer to the intelligent modern restorer who only proposes to remove excrescences, but to the earlier Italian restorer, alias over-painter.

Frescoes have been more fortunate in the matter of restoration than oil-paintings or tempera panels, that is to say, have been more neglected; partly because they are big and hard to get at and secondly, because, as fixtures they are less salable than portable pictures, and therefore have been less tempting to those who "improved" damaged works of art for the market. But fresco, too, has its lines of lesser resistance; the surface stucco is baked and cracked

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by the sun, damp and frost, and the formation of salts causes it to bloom or to fade, and there is one serious disadvantage inherent in the very first handling of the material itself. Fresco painting, being practically water-color painting upon a thin coating of plaster or stucco, a certain amount of wall surface has to be prepared over night for the artist, who must finish his work while the stucco is still damp, or else must retouch afterwards "*a secco*." Painting upon it is, therefore, what the French might call *peinture par morceau* on a grand scale. The practitioner has no opportunity of rubbing in his picture, as with an oil-painting, and working it together gradually, he must paint piece by piece, finishing each bit in one painting, if possible. As every artist knows, this rarely is possible, so that on nearly every fresco one sees a great number of what the Italians call repentances, *pentimenti*, where the master has made changes and additions by hatching or striping with the end of the brush,—a practice which was more prevalent and apparently more feasible than washing a second tint over the first. Now these *pentimenti* often suffer chemical change, and as Raphael was new to the material, he repented abundantly. There are thereby many places which make spots upon the whole.

Again there is the perishable nature of the surface; the transparent watery medium of fresco

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allows the whiteness of the plaster to be felt through the painting, and, keeping the color from falling into heaviness, gives a clear and cheerful look to the work, a look of freshness; but the surface easily becomes dirty, and if any cleaning is attempted, it must be done with great caution. The Camera della Segnatura has suffered from all these accidents common to fresco, yet the general color is warm and pleasing. The flesh, especially in the Scuola, does not seem to have been much restored or overpainted, and in his tonality Raphael still remains Umbrian, so that, save for the Mass of Bolsena, these frescoes are in their coloration the best of the series of the Stanze.

If we would know Raphael intimately as draughtsman, we must see him in his drawings, not his frescoes; we must go to Windsor and Oxford, to the Albertina and the Louvre. There is perhaps a more suave nobility in the accomplished figures of the Jurisprudence and the School of Athens, but for fire and freshness and correctness too, we must turn to those pen-scratched drawings, red chalk studies, charcoal designs, and sepia washes of the Continental and English museums. In the frescoed figures, the outline is sometimes coarse; instead of the delicately felt silhouette of Mantegna, we have a single sweep, and rather uncared for at that, indicating the whole line of a forearm or leg, for instance. This coarse-

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ness is often the fault of a restorer, for the restorer is severe with outlines and backgrounds ; he loves to emphasize the former, and to "clean up" the latter, thereby still further damaging the silhouette.

There has been so much of this damage by time and repainting that it is difficult to find out just how skilfully Raphael used fresco. To judge from the delicacy of many entire figures in the School of Athens, and especially of certain details, notably the feet, one would say very skilfully indeed, for in accounting the skill of the muralist, we must remember that the fresco painter does no handling, in the sense of loading to obtain texture, and that his work is, after all, a sort of drawing with a brush-point, when once the first washes have been passed over the stucco. Michelangelo, who was thoroughly unaccustomed to the medium, used it with great rapidity and skill upon the Sistine vaulting ; and it is probable that Raphael did not fall far behind him, although, be it said here, that he was never a man to lovingly caress a bit of modelling ; he delighted in drawing, and used pen, silver point, charcoal, chalk, with equal enthusiasm ; what he sought, was not careful expression of surface, or even delicately felt outline, but composition of the figure, movement, and style. There is, for instance, no such careful, skilful, and correct drawing and modelling here as in Andrea del Sarto's fresco *The Worship of the*

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Relics, in the Annunziata portico of Florence, and we are probably gainers by the fact, for Raphael's larger and freer manner suited his subject. It is just because Raphael constantly neglected *correct* drawing, giving his attention rather to style and freedom, that the veriest tyro feels able to criticise him, calls him wooden as to modelling, and, like del Sarto in Browning's poem says, "What an arm and *I* could alter it," but who forgets to continue, like the same Andrea, "Aye, but the play, the insight, and the stretch."

In fact, hardly any artist is so calculated to irritate the student or the dilettante in technique, as Raphael, because he consciously leaves out much that the student tries for especially. The student is taught, first of all, to find the proportions of the particular model who stands before him; next, to draw his outline as correctly as possible, and to model the figure with equal exactness by its lights and shadows; in fact, he is thinking first and last of correctness and the representation of the character of the model to which, if he be skilful enough, he will add cleverness in surface handling and management of his pencil or crayon, management for its own sake, that is. Now Raphael thought only of such handling as would most quickly express his intention; *per se*, he did not care at all for it. He gave his figures conventional pro-



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portions, and, as we have said, he constantly subordinated correctness to style; for the character of his model, except in portrait painting, he cared not a pin, unless that character approached his *certo ideale*. Perugino, his master, had not taught him to be either correct or forceful in character; for Perugino was an absolutely conventional draughtsman (creating his convention for himself, however, so that it would perhaps be more correct to call him mannered); rather he had encouraged his pupil to seek grace, charm, fervor. Indeed Raphael can hardly be said to have studied drawing seriously until he went to Florence; there he met the comrades of the realists, of Pollajuolo and Ghirlandajo; but he had not grown up with them, and he never (save in his portraits) drew as closely as Andrea del Sarto, not to mention the subtle Leonardo; he did better than Andrea, but in a different way. Michelangelo was, on the contrary, a draughtsman from the day in which he took the charcoal in hand; his figures are unlike nature indeed, but he is not unsympathetic to the art student, because, in the search for style, Buonarroti's departure from nature is caused by exaggeration of certain qualities dear to the student, while Raphael's comes from a slurring of these qualities. Style does not necessarily include or preclude correctness. Who shall define it? Who shall show us all the graduations that make up the

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gamut in which Ingres, correct and elevated, Michelangelo, incorrect and tremendous, Raphael, incorrect and abstractly noble, find their various places.

In 1511 the frescoes of this first Camera were finished ; we have, in speaking of them, stated roundly the existence of certain imperfections. The great Raphael has no need of indiscriminate admiration, no need of the praise which in referring to certain Madonnas, full of admirable qualities, has invested them with *all* the qualities, thereby obscuring criticism and offending the sincere art-lover. With his imperfections on his head, he remains one of the greatest artists who ever lived, and perhaps the greatest decorator to all time, so great, at all events, that no man may assign his place.

### III

THE Sala della Segnatura was only the first of a series of rooms to be decorated by Raphael; but after its completion, all the rest, save for the brilliant exception of the Miracle of Bolsena was anticlimax. The Heliodorus and the Liberation of Peter were grand and monumental in character; even the academic Incendio is full of interest, but all these were executed by assistants, and the remaining frescoes cannot compare in importance with other decorations of Raphael in Rome, such as the frescoes of the Farnesina, the Loggie, and the Sibyls of Santa Maria della Pace.

The distribution of the room called the Camera d'Elodoro is as follows: upon the vaulted ceiling are: God appearing to Noah, The Sacrifice of Abraham, Jacob's Dream, and God appearing to Moses in the burning bush. Upon the two walls which are pierced with windows appear: the Miracle of Bolsena and the Liberation of Peter; upon the clear walls are: Heliodorus driven from the Temple, the meeting of Attila and Pope Leo I. Upon the walls below the great frescoes are caryatides, eleven al-

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legorical, and four terminal figures, and also eleven little monochrome pictures referring to the industrial prosperity of the States of the Church.

If the Stanza della Segnatura, with its frescoed epitome of the triumph of the Faith and the cultus of Antiquity may be called the Apotheosis of the Renaissance, the Stanza d' Eliodoro, commenced during the lifetime of Julius II., and finished under Leo X., may pass for that of the Papacy. Having celebrated the large and tolerant civilization of the epoch of the Renaissance in the Scuola, the Disputà, the Parnassus, the pope now celebrated the Church, and by easy progression celebrated himself. The Expulsion of Heliodorus allegorizes the military ambition of Julius, Heliodorus standing for the foreign invader of Italy; the Mass of Bolsena again, in glorifying the faith, very naturally shows the pontiff as supreme spectator. Critics have severely condemned this egoism, but it was natural and the sequence was logical. It is true that Julius should have rather celebrated Constantine, or Gregory, but Raphael painted in and for his own epoch, and for all his political blunders Julius was the great pope of the Renaissance.

It is believed that with the exception of the group of women in the lower corner, at the left, Raphael painted the whole of the Mass of Bolsena with his own hand, and it was rarely given

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even to him to achieve such a masterpiece. In its treatment it is a marking instance of the quality which was one of Raphael's leading characteristics, perhaps the very first of all his characteristics, his marvellous power of assimilation. He instantly saw, and but a little later translated into his own language of expression, whatever noble or beautiful thing came under his eyes in the work of a predecessor. Here in this Camera of Heliodorus, in the very midst of impressions derived from the antique and from Michelangelo, he turns backward and applies "the grand manner" to the quiet, dignified art of the fifteenth century. In the Mass (or Miracle) of Bolsena, the serious, upturned profiles of Ghirlandajo's people of the Sassetti Chapel, and of Santa Maria Novella, are seen again; white-gowned acolytes of San Gimignano crowd about the ministrant priest, but are sublimated by the art of Raphael into a real apotheosis of the painting of the *quattrocento*.

If there were no architecture around it, the Mass of Bolsena would still be a beautiful picture; but in its accordance with the circumscribing architectural forms, it is especially a magnificent composition. Compositionally again, it affords the finest instance among Raphael's works of the balance of simple and elaborated masses in accordance with the law of filled and vacant spaces, the law whose wise fulfilment does so much to lend dignity, to establish



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equilibrium, to stamp even a small work with the monumental character.

The composition builds up superbly; in the centre the square altar-cloth is a sort of keystone, the pope and the ministrant priest kneel at either side, their lines converging upwards; behind them a choir-screen of carved wood curves slightly in contradiction to the arch of the lunette, which latter is echoed by a small archway just above the centre of the screen. To left and right the kneeling acolytes, prelates, and Swiss guards, the woman standing with upraised arm, the steps at either side of the altar, all lead the composition upwards and towards the centre, while the pillars at the top continue the up-rights of the window which is pierced through the wall. Everything in this fresco shows how easy to Raphael was the compositional filling of unusual architectural forms, such as broken lunettes or spandrels; he proved this facility again and again, in the *Disputà*, the *Jurisprudence*, the *Farnesina*, but never more notably than in the *Miracle of Bolsena*. In addition to all this, among the frescoes of Raphael it is by far the best in color; a Venetian need not have disclaimed its strength and harmony. It has been suggested that Raphael was inspired by the example of Giorgione; we should rather say that the artist had studied the work of Sebastiano del Piombo, although in its

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greens and reds the Bolsena somewhat recalls the frescoes of Giorgione's comrade, the young Titian, in the Scuola del Santo at Padua. It may also be noted here that in the Miracle of Bolsena, one feels the color to be wholly due to the executant, and not, as is the case in Pinturicchio's Borgia rooms, or Lippo's work at Spoleto, to a running together of colors and a toning of gold and ultramarine by time.

In the expulsion of Heliodorus, the color has, on the contrary, little harmony and the execution of the work is accredited to assistants. This fresco shows at once Giulio Romano's bricky-reds and the bright colors of Giovanni da Udine; the chemically disintegrated color of portions of the work is disagreeable, the outlines are coarse, the limbs heavy, but the fresco is grand, in spite of it all, with the spirit of Raphael and of the best years of the sixteenth century. Although the execution is pupils' work, Raphael's Giulio of Rome is a very different man from Gonzaga's Giulio of Mantua. The face of one of the avenging angels is fine, in spite of a conventionalizing of thick, curved lips, a certain lumpishness of the pseudo-Grecian nose, and upon the scowling forehead of his horseman, a foreshadowing of the grimace which Giulio afterwards constantly reproduced in his Palazzo del T. There is a splendid rush to the figures with the scourges,

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and the composition massed upon the two sides of the lunette about an open centre, and carried to the top by heavy architectural forms, is very fine, if academic, but does not equal that of the Bolsena.

It has been noted that in comparison with the Sala della Segnatura we find in the Camera of Heliodorus an unfortunate narrowing of subject. This is, however, not half so important or half so unfortunate as the *expansion of methods* shown here, which resulted in the confiding of a great part of the work upon the walls to pupils. But this expansion, like the narrowing, was inevitable. Every one wanted Raphael's work, the Pope, Chigi, Conti, Bembo, Bibbiena, Goritz. No man could say no to the pope, even the stubborn Michelangelo yielded when Julius threatened to throw him from the scaffold; least of all could Raphael say no to any one. His was not a weak character, but the very nature which made him seize upon the pictorial qualities of other men's work, impelled him to adopt with equal eagerness the pictorial suggestions of his friends. He instantly apprehended their thought, developed it, and could not help wishing to materialize it. For such materialization, time could not suffice, unless Raphael had a score of hands. He soon had them — two of his frescoes in the Camera of Heliodorus and the Madonna of Foligno are said to have been painted within fourteen months! The

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result of this was that while the distribution of the second Stanza was admirable, the composition in the main magnificent, the execution was utterly unequal, and the room remains inferior to the Sala della Segnatura. This inferiority is undeniable, and yet it is equally certain that the Bolsena, the Liberation, and the Heliodorus have a breadth of feeling which shows that the Raphael who is behind them is a riper and maturer man than even the painter of the Segnatura frescoes, but, alas, he is *behind* them, hidden or at any rate veiled and blurred by the personality of his pupils.

This interposition of the pupil between the master and his work we shall discuss more fully at the end of this paper; it is an obscuring element in the study of Raphael, and one which can never be completely dealt with, since no analysis can determine just where the handiwork of the master joins that of his assistant. We must not be too ready to accuse Raphael of a want of artistic integrity, for artistic integrity does not consist in the master's doing every whit of the work himself, but in his attaining the very highest and best result of his combined temperament and skill, so that the question in this case became, which would be better, one room painted entirely by Raphael, or the decoration of five rooms inspired by him and carried out by assistants working with and under him.

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We know how Raphael answered this question, and in view of his temperament we may be sure that he answered it according to his best belief and without being influenced by mercenary considerations. His easel pictures alone would have provided comfort, even luxury, for him, but he burned to create, to compose, to synthesize, and the natural end of all this was the audacious and sublime project of measuring, studying, and restoring the whole of ancient Rome.

Where the exact point may have been at which Raphael could have begun to make use of his assistants with perfect wisdom and advantage to the sum total of his work, we shall never know, but it is certain that he accepted commissions for more than he could possibly perform, and that his use of other men's skill was phenomenal in its extent. The artist to-day winces at the idea of confiding a whole great fresco to pupils, and shudders at the statement made by writers upon Raphael, that when he took the Sala del Eliodoro in hand, he began to furnish only scratch-sketches, rough suggestions of movement and composition, and then permitted his pupils to completely execute the finished sketches from which all the working drawings were made. Such a method, if rigorously carried out, would have almost eliminated the master's personality in everything except composition, and



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although the frescoes of the Loggie and certain others look as though this mode of preparation may have been applied to them, it is difficult not to feel that in most cases the artist kept close to the pupil and at one time or another put a great deal of Raphael into the sketches.

As for the amount of work produced, which, save for Raphael as inspiration, could never have come into the world, it was simply prodigious; between the frescoes of the Segnatura and the Heliodorus hall, came the portrait of Julius, many Madonnas, del Popolo, di Casa Alba, the Garvagh, the Virgin of the Diadem, and others. The Foligno altar-piece was contemporaneous with the second Stanza; then we hear of more *Madonne*, del Divino Amore, dell' Impannata, the portrait of Bindo Altoviti, and the Isaiah. Add to all this, the study of antiquities that was busily carried on, the exchange of social courtesies between the artist and his many and powerful friends, and one can easily realize that the pace was a killing one. It was soon to be accelerated by a new impulse, that of fulfilling the duties of architect in chief of St. Peter's. We may also remember, as a complicating circumstance, that as early as when Raphael was finishing the Segnatura frescoes he was in love, either with a lady or with the art of sonneteering, an art in which his great rival Michelangelo, excelled, and

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which was practised by many wits and learned men of the papal court. Crowe and Cavalcaselle note the quaintness of the contrast between the unerring sureness that controlled the painting, and the uncertainty which prompted the scrawling of whole lines of alternative rhymes, solo, nolo, dolo, rei, dei, lei, upon the sides of his sketches and studies.

On February 13, 1513, Julius II. died, and in the next fresco of the Heliodorus hall, we have a Medici instead of a Rovere. Cardinal Giovanni, son of the Magnificent Lorenzo, and who sat for his portrait in the fresco of the Decretals of the Segnatura, now advances as proxy for Saint Leo, and as actual Pope Leo X., to meet Attila at the gates of Rome; indeed, he appears also in double and as cardinal, riding behind the pope, having been so painted while Julius was still alive. In this fresco, the Attila, architechtonic composition has been frankly abandoned; it is simply a picture in a lunette; some of the figures are fine, others merely declamatory, while certain of the horses are not only theatrical, but absurd.

The fourth fresco of the room, *Lo Scarcerazione*, the Liberation of St. Peter, is dated 1514. As in most of the Vatican subjects of Raphael, it contains a political allusion, probably to the Battle of Ravenna and the escape of Pope Leo (then a cardinal) from the French.

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It must be admitted that in this work Raphael somewhat departs from the principles of mural decoration; first, he divides his composition into three distinct incidents; secondly, in painter's parlance, he breaks a hole through the wall with his violent opposition of lights and shadows. But the work is monumentally composed as to its distribution of masses, and is a *chef d'œuvre*, and the temptation to produce it which overpowered Raphael was here again the probable result of his intensely assimilative nature. Piero della Francesca had frescoed this room before him. Now Piero's vision of Constantine in San Francesco at Arezzo affords the first instance of a *tour de force* of chiaroscuro; it is not unlikely that della Francesca had here repeated some such effect, and that Raphael could not resist the opportunity "to better his instruction." As it is, the treatment of chiaroscuro upon so monumental a scale was a daring and successful novelty.

The Stanza which comes fourth as to date is usually called the Stanza dell' Incendio, and only the fresco which gives its name to the room holds the interest long; here Raphael frankly turns over the work to his assistants, and is felt only as an inspiration and in the painting of certain rare fragments. As a result, three of the frescoes present little of the interest to be found in the Camera della Segnatura, and the fourth, the best of the series, the

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Incendio del Borgo, is melodramatic rather than dramatic, and is a coarse and exaggerated development of the fine drawings in Vienna, — drawings which themselves are not exempt from an academic and theatrical character. Here begin the attitudinizing, the rolling of eyes, the grimace of widely opened mouths, of over-emphatic gesture, and all the delineation of a "fine frenzy." The epoch of exaggeration had set in and controversy was not slow to follow. Many of the courtiers admired these later frescoes enthusiastically, the more so for the many portraits of prelates that were conveniently introduced. But we hear from the opposition in the letter of the saddler Leonardo to Michelangelo; speaking of the Farnesina frescoes, he says, "They are even worse than those of the last Camera" (of the Incendio del Borgo). The figures attitudinize; all this would-be emotion leaves us indifferent, but nevertheless under and behind the exaggeration and the coldness is still the superb power of the Renaissance; we are yet close to the life-giving force of Raphael.

The fresco of the Battle of Ostia, which was executed in 1514–15, was not painted by Raphael himself, with the exception perhaps of the portraits of the pope and of his attendants, Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Bibbiena. The work is full of varied action, but which is distinctly theatrical, while the

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figures are very inferior to the drawings made as studies for them, and now in the Museum of Oxford. One of these studies for the Battle of Ostia is a drawing in red chalk now in Vienna. This drawing is said to have been sent to Dürer in 1515, but the inscription upon it, stating that Raphael sent it as a specimen of his handiwork is now pronounced apocryphal. Morelli asserts that it, as well as the studies for the Incendio del Borgo, the water-carrier, the young man bearing his father, etc., which are in the same Museum of Vienna, are all by Giulio Romano. He believes that at this epoch Raphael usually made only a slight preliminary sketch, which was turned into a finished study by his pupils, and then enlarged into cartoons, which latter, after having been corrected somewhat by Raphael, were approved, and then carried to completion by assistants.

In ending the notes upon the Stanze of Raphael one may again remark the coarseness of outline which is to be found even in some of the finest figures; instead of the many subtile little planes which make up the silhouette of an arm or leg, two or three sweeping touches will outline a calf or forearm; in many of the faces the features are generalized till they seem only a Renaissance reminiscence of an antique statue. This is partly because pupils imperfectly translated Raphael's



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sketches, partly because restorers have coarsened the modelling, hardened and thickened the outlines. Take them for all in all, the figures of the Stanze will not stand as pieces of subtile drawing or characterization, but they are masterpieces of style and of movement, and are intended to tell at a distance and as parts of a whole. To see how they gain when allowed to fulfil their true purpose, we have only to compare the large isochromatic photographs of figures in detail with the same figures when seen in those photographs that show the *ensemble* of the fresco to which the said figures belong; seen in this *ensemble* every line becomes a part of the main scheme.

#### IV

RAPHAEL had now but four or five years of life left to him, but even if we leave all easel pictures out of the question, and account him as decorator only, we find that alternating scripture-history and mythology, he in this short time painted, or, at any rate, inspired and caused to be painted, three great cycles of works, the Loggie of the Vatican, the tapestry cartoons, the frescoes of the Farnesina, besides the single frescoes, the Galatea, the Sibyls of Santa Maria della Pace, and the mosaics of the Chigi Chapel.

The Loggie of the Vatican (painted 1517-19) consist of thirteen arcades vaulted *in cupola*. Each of the arcades contains four subjects; there are consequently fifty-two in all, nearly forty of which were inspired by Raphael. The *grotteschi*, which surround the subjects, are what especially strike the visitor to the Loggie. The general effect is cheerful, even gay, astonishingly varied in motive, and quintessentially characteristic of the Renaissance. No decoration gives a stronger impression of the spontaneity, freshness, fecundity, and endless resources of the epoch. The inspiration for

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the ornamental portions of these frescoes came from subterranean Rome, from the wall paintings of antiquity, and the Loggie in their turn have been a quarry for the decorators of four hundred years. It is in the purely decorative parts, the so-called grotesques (*grottesche* from the *grotte*, grottoes or excavations, in which the original mural paintings were found), in the interwoven figures and scrolls, that we find special subject for admiration.

As for the sacred subjects painted in the rectangles of the lunettes, they were probably hastily and badly executed in the beginning, were exposed to the open air, have been battered almost to pieces, and so restored that they suggest the staring fire-boards of the beginning of our century; an arm or a leg seems the result of a single brush-sweep; the beard or hair of a patriarch is often a patch of white slapped on and set awry at that, like a wig. Such figures as the Eve in the Creation, and in the Expulsion from Paradise, are horrible little monstrosities, incredible in proportions and outlines. Such can be accounted for only by supposing that at one time or another common house-painters, set to repair damage, have daubed over entire figures. These portions of the Loggie mark the lowest level to which anything proceeding originally from Raphael's inspiration fell, the worst parts of the Farnesina frescoes are delicate in comparison. And yet in

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spite of their astonishing coarseness of execution and line, some of these figures are grand in line as well, and some of the subjects have a simplicity, beauty, and freshness of composition which give evidence of the best side of Raphael's capacity, even though the artist never touched them himself and took part in them only as an inspiration.

If he had given his pupils such careful studies to carry out as the chalk drawings, let us say, which he made in the early days of his *Segnatura* work, for his *Massacre of the Innocents*, we should probably have had grand results in the cases of not a few of the *Loggie* subjects, — notably the creation of Sun and Moon, the *Burning Bush*, *Abraham* and the *Angels*, the *Flight of Lot*, *God appearing to Isaac*, and indeed many others.

Some of the critics who have most carefully studied the *Loggie* will not admit that a single stroke by Raphael himself remains to prove that he ever furnished even first rough scratch-sketches, for the subjects; and they believe that the thirty or more drawings, still existing in various collections were either made by pupils, at his suggestion, for the subjects, or else are posterior to the latter, and are memorandum-copies.

Be all this as it may, at least a dozen subjects show that Raphael directly controlled Giulio in his conception of their composition and movement.

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If there has been much loss in such procedure, there has been also some gain, for perhaps nothing in Raphael's career more triumphantly proves the force of spirit, than does this wonder of the man's inspiration, here and especially in the cycle of the Farnesina, breaking through the clumsy envelope cast over it by inferiority of workmanship, by haste and lack of care and the ravage of time. No matter if Giulio painted the goddesses of the Farnesina brick-red, and if the bowered frame-work of Giovanni da Udine has been turned by dampness and Carlo Maratta's restorations to a blotched and coarse green. They are goddesses for all that, grand and free; they could have come only in the full *cinquecento* and from Raphael Sanzio. If Galatea be battered and coarsened in outline, if the color be brutally altered, the artist has, nevertheless, translated the classics more truly than could the most learned humanist. Here the *cinquecento* love of antiquity finds its truest expression, and this painter of Madonnas and saints feels the old Greek joy of life, so that the dry wall, for all its chalky color, shows to us the sea with its salt strength, the freedom of brown, bare limbs, the clouds and the breeze, and white foam on blue water. Indeed, even in the coarse handling of the Loggie and Farnesina frescoes, one sympathizes with a sort of fearlessness akin to that with which the decorators



of Pompeii attacked their walls, working debonairely and not giving themselves much pains, but building upon the foundation of a great tradition.

The Farnesina is something of a shock at first; one looks up at the lunettes and comments, "What house-painters' pots of color, and no time taken to mix or temper anything afterwards!" and then one stares at the still more coarsely executed rectangles of the ceiling, with an ever-growing wonder that the great Raphael, no matter how hurried, could have had the Sistine Madonna and the portrait of Leo X. in his studio, and in his outstanding performance could have tolerated such slurred work as was being given to Chigi's pavilion. It is preposterous, and one can almost fancy such a light-hearted impresario, going into the Farnesina for five minutes on the eve of that excursion which he made with Castiglione and Bembo and Navagero to Tivoli, and saying, "Giulio mio, I'm going into the mountains with some friends for to-morrow's Sunday holiday; put me up a Psyche received in Olympus in that rectangle; you have my sketches for it, see that you have the twelve gods on the ceiling by Monday morning. I shall be back, and will come in and tell you if there's anything more to be done to them." The prodigious amount of work executed during the three last years of Raphael's life suggest almost such a burlesque summariness of

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planning and fulfilment; and yet, and yet! Who would exchange the result in the Farnesina for any other modern artist's rendering of Greek myth or antique life.

Raphael's "antiquity" is absolutely *sui generis*; it is not Greek, it is Raphael; but he felt and expressed more nearly than has any modern man that joyous freedom which we like to think existed when the world was young. He had never seen Pompeii; but, buried as it was, he divined it through the little Roman houses of the Palatine and the Tiber, and his pupils placed upon the walls of the Borgia apartments, those Hours which are indeed irrevocable now, but which even in the meanest prints that perpetuate them seem echoes from the work of some Greek wall painter.

No other had divined all this until Raphael came; painters had been in love with antiquity for an hundred years, and thought themselves classical in their style. Botticelli created bewitching masquerades intensely personal to himself and to no other, Greek or Tuscan; Ghirlandajo and Filippino, dragged armor and standards out of the humanistic property-room, and manufactured so many Florentine "supers" at rehearsal. Mantegna really put on the sandals and wore them worthily, but moved only to stateliest cadences, with chin held high and frowning brow.

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Raphael, the mighty brain-picker, himself the mightily endowed of mind, looked upon the wall-paintings of the *scavi*, and made them his own. He seemed to see as the ancients did, not as those who modelled a Farnese torso, but as if some craftsman throwing upon the walls of Baiæ or Capua, joyous stories from the Greek myths, gayly, almost carelessly but with a whole world of tradition behind him, had suddenly been gifted with an all-compelling genius.

What other man could have had such visions as gave us Galatea, or the grand women in the best of the Farnesina frescoes, or the spirits who toss their arms above the Zodiacal signs in the mosaics of Santa Maria del Popolo. And while he was seeing the visions, he came down to earth now and again to pore over the Vitruvius which Fabio Calvo was translating for him; to measure the ancient monuments of the city; to paint many portraits, of the pope, Castiglione, Bembo, Bibbiena, Navagero, Beazzano, and to furnish material to Marco Antonio for his engravings. We may add the Madonna of San Sisto to the visions, and may note that in addition to painting many other easel pictures, the Saint Cecilia, the Holy Family of Francis I., the Saint Michael, the Madonna of the Chair, he incidentally built two or three palaces, and diligently attended to the strengthening of the piers of

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Saint Peter's; it is enough to make the head swim.

After the popes, no one was so responsible for Raphael's unremitting labor as Agostino Chigi, who, to the commission for the Farnesina frescoes, added those for the Sibyls in Santa Maria della Pace, and for the mosaics in his family chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo. In the latter, Raphael apparently proposed to execute a grand cycle, commencing with the creation of the stars by the Eternal Father, a subject which as a medallion should close the centre of the vaulting; this, as well as eight panels representing the creation of the planets, was executed in mosaic by Aloisio della Pace, a Venetian [1516-24]. Here the work stopped, whereas Raphael, had he lived, would probably have completed an entire and grand system of decoration by the addition of the principal episodes from Genesis and from the history of the Redemption. In the mosaics which were executed, Raphael, inspired by the *Convito* of Dante, in which angels move the different planets, has given to each one of the constellations of the zodiac a celestial messenger as a governing presence, and has placed Jehovah above them all. At this epoch of the sixteenth century few of the rules obtained which controlled mosaic at an earlier time. We, therefore, find here a treatment wholly differing from that seen, for instance,

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at Ravenna; it is a Renaissance treatment which, in spite of its advanced technique, as to design and modelling is inferior in true decorative principle to the work of the early Christian centuries; but for all their hardness of modelling and color, some of these mosaics are very beautiful and thoroughly Raphaellesque in character.

In the Sibyls, on the contrary, Vasari will have it, that Raphael was "greatly assisted by having seen the work of Michelangelo in the Chapel of the Pope." "He has walked through my chapel," said Buonarroti, if we may believe the story, and truly he had; but just as Raphael could not help borrowing from each beautiful thing that he saw, so also he could not help changing what he borrowed until he made it his own, and if the Sibyls of the Pace are cousins to the women of the Sistina, they are sisters to those in the Jurisprudence of the Segnatura. Whenever Raphael and Michelangelo came into contact with each other, some legend has grown up. Cinelli, in his *Bellezze di Firenze*, tells us that the former had received five hundred ducats on account for his Sibyls; on his asking for the remainder due him, Chigi's cashier refused to pay more, and demanded that the matter should be referred to an expert. Michelangelo was chosen, and going to Santa Maria della Pace, affirmed that each head was of itself worth one hundred



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ducats. Chigi, having been informed of the fact, immediately ordered his cashier to pay four hundred ducats more, and said, "Be courteous with Raphael, and satisfy him well, for if he makes us pay for the draperies too, we shall be ruined."

About five years before he died, came the coveted opportunity to take part in the decoration of the Sistine chapel. The pope commissioned him to design a series of tapestries to cover the lower walls, and this valiant artist, who was such a decorator, such a realist when he chose to paint a pitilessly exact portrait of an Inghirami, now showed that he could illustrate text as forcibly and directly as the great dramaturgist Giotto.

The people of the Renaissance had never heard of art for art's sake; as for us, it is probable that in the bottom of our hearts we all have a good healthy love of illustration of text, just as we have of hearing a good story well told; and for us one of the quite wonderful sides of Raphael is that which he shows in telling his Bible stories with such force and directness that a child can understand them, so that once he has seen Ananias and Sapphira in the tapestry cartoon, no other presentation of the same scene ever quite takes its place. Here again we have excellence in spite of grave defects of mannerism; the tapestries belong to the epoch of the attitudinizing Incendio. These groups of apostles look

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as if an electric shock had caused every one's hair to stand on end, and spread wide all the fingers and toes in the picture; but what admirable composition, and what clarity! These are the stories of the New Testament as understood by *us*. To Europeans and their descendants, the Orientals of Tissot and Bida, as actors in scripture drama, are unfamiliar; Aryans of our own race have supplied Aryan actors, from the mason's prentice playing in the cathedral mysteries, down to Robbia's Maries and Buonarroti's prophets, and from them again to villagers of Oberammergau. In the long line no *dramatis personæ* are more familiar than those of the cartoons furnished to Pope Leo and it is not too much to say that before the days of King James, the Bible was translated for English-speaking people by Raphael Sanzio.

By 1520, Raphael had crowded into thirty-seven years the achievement of a century. He died on his birthday, Good Friday, the sixth of March at the very moment of the culmination that he had so mightily helped to bring about. Almost at his elbow in the Sistine chapel Michelangelo had completed the greatest pictorial creation that has been given to the world; in Venice, Titian was at the height of his career and in Parma, Correggio was about to paint the decorations of the Cupola.

## V

THE study of the works of Raphael is necessarily the study of the evolution of the pictorial art of Central Italy. For two hundred years great painters had been working at problems of suggestion, expression, and technical achievement. Giotto had taught art to be real and dramatic, grand and simple at once; the naturalists had learned to paint man; their greater contemporaries to express him in his essential attributes; Masaccio had made man's body a solid realization in an ambient environment; Botticelli had used that body as a sort of pattern for lovely decorative composition of lines; Ghirlandajo had found in it a pretext for dignified portraiture; Signorelli had made it material for the expression of movement by muscular construction, and Perugino had pierced its envelope for the pietistic ecstasy beneath. Each of these men, with more or less width of purpose and scope of realization, had cultivated his own vantage-point till the art fields of Italy were indeed those of the *Blüthe Zeit*.

Then came Raphael, the grand harvester, and bound up the sheaves of the Renaissance. But he

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did not collect and bind only, he sifted, he rejected, and he added, added mightily. The age had wreaked itself upon experiment; experiment in expression, anatomy, perspective, composition, and decorative detail. Raphael judged all this experiment, and taking the various results examined and almost instinctively selected from each what was best suited to the needs of pictorial presentation, what was best worth saving, perpetuating, and sublimating. Having done all this, he synthetized his material, and in presenting it, added so much of his own, that the result of his alembication more than justified his eclecticism.

We have considered him only as decorator; but for three hundred years after his death he was famous less by his mural paintings than by his transportable pictures which carried his name to tens of thousands who lived beyond the Alps, and by the engraved reproductions of his tapestry cartoons which told Bible stories to Europe, Protestant and Catholic alike. Most of all, he held his public by his treatment of the subject which through its universal humanity was the touchstone of every artist's power to appeal to the heart, the Mother and Child. Not the Queen of Heaven of the fourteenth century, not even the Mary of the fifteenth century, human and sympathetic, but made more or less official by the throne and the paraphernalia of

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ceremonial worship, not these, but just a mother with a baby, was enough for the early *cinquecento* artists, and among them all none was simpler in his treatment of costume, none rejected accessory more readily than Raphael. To the people of his own time, the people at large, that is to say, not the dilettanti, he undoubtedly appealed most by the sweetness of his Maries, and especially by his power of creating a more beautiful and more human type of Christ-child than any which had yet been seen. The amateurs of his day, and the critics of our own time, have in their turn not undervalued this marvellous capacity which made him dear to the people, — the capacity, that is, for drawing figures of infants, graceful, powerful, and expressive beyond any preceding creations of brush or painting save those of Leonardo. But to these more enlightened critics, Raphael has been perhaps yet more wonderful by reason of the endless, tireless invention, which, with but three figures for its material, rang all the compositional changes that were possible without straining for effect, upon so simple a subject as that of a mother and two children.

This subject of the Holy Family, beginning with such simple pictures as the Solly Madonna, and expanding into vast altar-pieces like the Foligno, has been with a certain public, and that a large one, the most popular in the entire range of Raphael's works,



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and the admiration given it at times has been, if not too lavish, certainly too indiscriminate.

Later criticism, in attempting to put an end to this undiscerning praise, has gone too far on the other side; for if three centuries called Raphael divine, many a student of the Romantic epoch, and especially of our own days, when surface-handling is so highly esteemed, has dismissed his work contemptuously, as *pompier*, painty and wooden. Some of it is all of these three things, but none of it is worthy of contempt, for the least of his works shows, in some degree, either his compositional force or his superiority over his contemporaries in certain directions. He is *pompier* in his tapestry cartoons, his Transfiguration, and often elsewhere he is rather wooden, as in the Belle Jardinière and some of her sisters. He is painty too, which last word means that, in places, the flesh, and especially the drapery, suggest paint on wood rather than the substances which they are intended to represent. But if some of his compositions seem to us academic, through the sense of preoccupation conveyed, we must not forget that much of what appears to us conventionality, comes from the fact that these compositions were so well found, so admirably ponderated, that imitators have stolen the thought without submitting to the preoccupation, and through their own weakness have made the originals seem conventional.

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As to surface-handling, if we accord it the meaning that it usually conveys to-day, that of clever manipulation of pigment, we must remember that practically it did not exist for Raphael's contemporaries.

Fresco was the medium used by Tuscans during centuries of wall decoration, and fresco being water-color, no loading for the sake of effect could be obtained, nor could tricks of handling be perceived at all in works placed at so great a distance from the eye as were most mural decorations. It was therefore not in the traditions of Tuscan art that any painter should attempt handling, or any public demand it, so that rendering of surface with Raphael's immediate predecessors had been performed only in the most primitive manner, as in the embossing of pattern upon draperies. If, then, many lovers of technique have found Raphael unsympathetic on account of his lack of surface-handling, they must admit, after a fair examination, that he not only followed the example of his contemporaries, but that in at least one picture, the portrait of Leo X., he went further than they did in the attempt to render texture, of the silk brocade, for instance, the gilded bell, and the tablecloth.

The fact that skilful manipulation of pigment in surface-handling did not obtain until after Raphael's time, does not however excuse a relative indifference to handling which makes his modelling sometimes

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appear unconsidered, if we compare it with the close and subtile treatment of some of his contemporaries; for instance, with the treatment of the profile heads of monks by Perugino in the Florentine Academy, or the heads of Ghirlandajo's shepherds in the same gallery. Many late fifteenth century works have a closeness of modelling which is almost Flemish; Raphael's is not like this, and his modelling is at the point of evolution where it ceased to have the delicate, if rather dry, closeness of certain primitive Tuscan masters, without approaching the breadth of Titian's later manner, or giving even the slightest hint of the robust, square touches which came in the seventeenth century with Velasquez and Hals. Every artist eventually makes his effect with what he cares for most, and modelling *per se*, whether close or broad, was not what Raphael liked best or next to best. So it was with his color; the evolution of his art-work shows that he did not hold color as dearly as an Umbrian and a pupil of Perugino might have been expected to. Had he cared to keep his mind to it, he could have always been an agreeable colorist, but probably never an individually great one.

Raphael began as an Umbrian, and with the true Umbrian coloration, which is agreeable with a certain yellow warmth that in the best examples becomes even rich, but which is serene and quiet, and never

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reaches the strongly individual, as with Tintoretto at his best; the deeply solemn, as with Titian and Giorgione, or the freshly opalescent, as with Veronese and Tiepolo. Some of Raphael's Madonnas have this golden Umbrian coloration; others have been cleaned till they are crude, or overpainted till they are heavy or even dirty. Nor is it always the fault of the restorer.

In his later days, when great commissions crowded upon him, when envoys from kings and dukes stood at his elbow, urging him more and more to satisfy their masters, it would seem as if Raphael grew to care less for color and to slur it. Now and then, he had notable changes of heart, as in the *Leo X.* and the *Miracle of Bolsena*. In the portrait of *Leo*, we find an intellectual scheme of color, a scale of reds unusual both for the painter as individual and for his epoch of art in Tuscany, and which is far more considered than is the color scheme of almost any other among his works. In the *Bolsena*, we see Raphael again as assimilator; having profited by the experiments made by other men in the direction of character, composition, movement, he now, after seeing and admiring the color of the Venetians in the work of Sebastiano del Piombo, reproduces it with surprising success. It is admirably comprehended; but it is not quite Venetian; all the more that it is based upon the work of a man who was himself soon

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affected by the Roman school. It is strong and glowing, but he falls short of Titian, for if the fresco-work of Titian in Padua be coarse in handling, it is not so in color, while there is a touch of color-coarseness in the Bolsena. This coarseness runs also to a sort of dry, bright commonplaceness in the drapery of the Madonna della Seggiola. Nevertheless, Raphael would have done well to have remained Umbrian, or imitated his Venetian fellow, rather than to have pushed Leonardo's *sfumatura* in color as far as he did.

But we have seen that Raphael experimented and selected incessantly, and kept what he thought was most useful to his presentation; towards the end of his days he sought not nearly so much for color as for dramatic relief; therefore, he clung to the black shadows of Leonardo and Bartolommeo, — shadows which have blackened still more by the effect of time, and which became more disagreeable with Raphael than with da Vinci, because his modelling was much harder than the latter's. In short, Raphael was able to acquit himself admirably in color, but generally preferred to give the time and thought to something else; was agreeable in many works, admirable in the Leo and the Bolsena, and, at the end of his life, sacrificed color to other qualities in his Transfiguration.

As composer, Raphael was absolute monarch, and



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ruled as he pleased ; taking other men's compositions, if he chose, bettering them, and founding upon them, or inventing new ones of his own, without the slightest suggestion of straining ; indeed, he banished all sense of strain from his composition as completely as he eschewed the ugly or painful in his choice of subject. His figures in some of his later works might gesticulate and roll their eyes ; but they are easily composed, and, as was fitting in one who overlooked and judged, he brought to art a quality which led all his other ones, — the quality of high serenity.

After his drawings, and in almost equal degree, it is Raphael's composition which brings us nearest to him as an artist, closest to his real intention. In other ways, the pupil-assistant is constantly interposed between the master and ourselves, but collaboration, which may blunt outline and make color heavy, is almost powerless to distort composition. Through the art of composition the painter takes his spectator directly by the hand ; by concentration he focuses the eye of that spectator upon the point in his picture which is most important ; then, by the ordering of the lines, and lights, and shadows, he leads him, as he wishes, from point to point, and gifts him with a sense of well-being, born of the wise distribution of the masses, the chiaroscuro, and the lines. This itinerary is involuntary to the spectator,

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but is, therefore, all the more delightful, and of this art of composition Raphael was the greatest master of the modern world.

The comparison of Raphael with Michelangelo is inevitable, but not very profitable ; each sat upon the mountain-top, one in clouds, the other in sunshine ; for Buonarotti's *terribilità* we have Raphael's serenity ; in either quality there is power. Michelangelo's was the most overwhelming personality in the history of modern art, and a whole generation struggled in its shadow, and could not escape its fascination. Raphael used the personalities of all the greatest artists of his time, and made some of their best his own. His working life was only a little more than a quarter as long as the span of nearly seventy years of labor allotted to his great rival, Michelangelo. Raphael is the typically youthful artist, and therein is forever the very archetype of the Renaissance, of the New Birth, of the epoch when the world was young again, and men turned east and west, upward and onward ; to the arts with Leonardo, to the seas with Columbus, to the heavens with Copernicus, in dauntless conviction that their question, if earnestly asked, should assuredly find an answer somewhere in the great economy of nature.



# FLORENTINE SKETCHES





## FLORENTINE SKETCHES

### I

THE traveller who, turning his back to the gates of Ghiberti, passes, for the first time, under the glittering new mosaics and through the main doors of Santa Maria del Fiore experiences a sensation. He leaves behind him the façade, dazzling in its patterns of black and white marble, all laced with sculpture, he enters to dim, bare vastness, — surely, never was bleaker lining to a splendid exterior. Across a floor that seems unending, he makes long journeys, from monument to monument; to gigantic *condottieri*, riding ghostlike in the semi-darkness against the upper walls; to Luca's saints and angels in the sacristies; to Donatello's Saint John, grand and tranquil in his niche, and to Michelangelo's group, grand and troubled in its rough-hewn marble.

At length, in the north transept, he comes to a small door, and entering there, he may, if legs and wind hold out, climb five hundred and fifteen steps to the top of the mightiest dome in the world, the widest in span, and the highest from spring to sum-

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mit. For the first one hundred and fifty steps or so, there are square turnings, and the stone looks sharp, and new, and solid; a space vaulted by a domical roof follows, and is apparently above one of the apsidal domes to the church; then a narrow spiral staircase leads to where a second door opens upon a very narrow, balustraded walk that runs around the inner side of the dome.

He is at an altitude of sixty-seven metres, exactly at the spring of the cupola and the beginning of the Vasari frescoes; the feet are at an elevation of one metre less than is that of the tower tops of Notre Dame de Paris, and yet the Dome hollows away overhead, huge enough, high enough to contain a second church piled, Pelion-like upon the first. Before, in the dimness, is the vastest roof-covered void in the world; it is terrific, and if the visitor be susceptible, his knees shake, and his diaphragm seems to sink to meet them.

The impression is tremendous; no wonder that the Tuscans felt Brunelleschi to be the central figure of the Renaissance. Again and again, whether in the gallery or between the walls of the dome, the thought comes: men built this, and one man dared it and planned it. Not even the Pyramids impress more strongly; for if Brunelleschi built a lesser pyramid, he hollowed his and hung it in the air.

On the other side of the space, a small black spot

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becomes a door when the traveller has giddily circled half the dome; it opens upon another staircase, up which he climbs between the two skins of the cupola, or rather between two of the three, like a parasite upon a monster. Sometimes the place suggests a ship, with the oculi as gunports, piercing to the outer day, or else, his mind fresh from that red *inferno* of Vasari's frescoes, the traveller is tunnelling up through a volcano crater with a whole Typhonic, Enceladus-buried world below. To right and left, the smoothed, cemented surface curves away and upward, brick buttresses appear constantly, but always with the courses of brick laid slanting to the earth's level, and perpendicular to the thrust of the dome. Every possible effect of light and obscurity makes the strange vistas yet more weird, and, now and then, there is a feeling of standing upon the vast, rounding slope of some planet that shines at one's feet, then gradually falls away into the surrounding blackness.

The famous "oaken chain" of Vasari's life of Brunelleschi is there, bolted together in successive beams. Last of all, a long, straight staircase, straight because without turn to right or left, curves upward like an unradiant, bowed Valhalla-bridge to a great burst of daylight, and the climber is upon the top of the dome.

He is as completely cut off from the immediately

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surrounding earth as upon a cloud-girdled mountain, for the dome swells so vastly below that the piazza cannot be seen about transept or choir, and not one of the apsidal domes shows a tile of its covering, while the nave, that huge and tremendous nave of Santa Maria, looks but a narrow, and a distant roof. At one's back, the marble of the lantern is handsome and creamy in color, but battered and broken; its interior is curious, — a narrow funnel of marble, little wider than a man's body, set with irons on either side, is the only ladder, so that the climb up is a close squeeze. There is a familiar something gone from the surroundings, and that something is soon remembered to be Dante's baptistery, which does not exist from Brunelleschi's dome, being blotted out by the façade of Santa Maria. One hundred feet below, showing its upper and richer portion gloriously from this novel point of view, is what from the piazza is the soaring bell tower, the Campanile of Giotto.

FLORENCE

FRANCESCO TALENTI

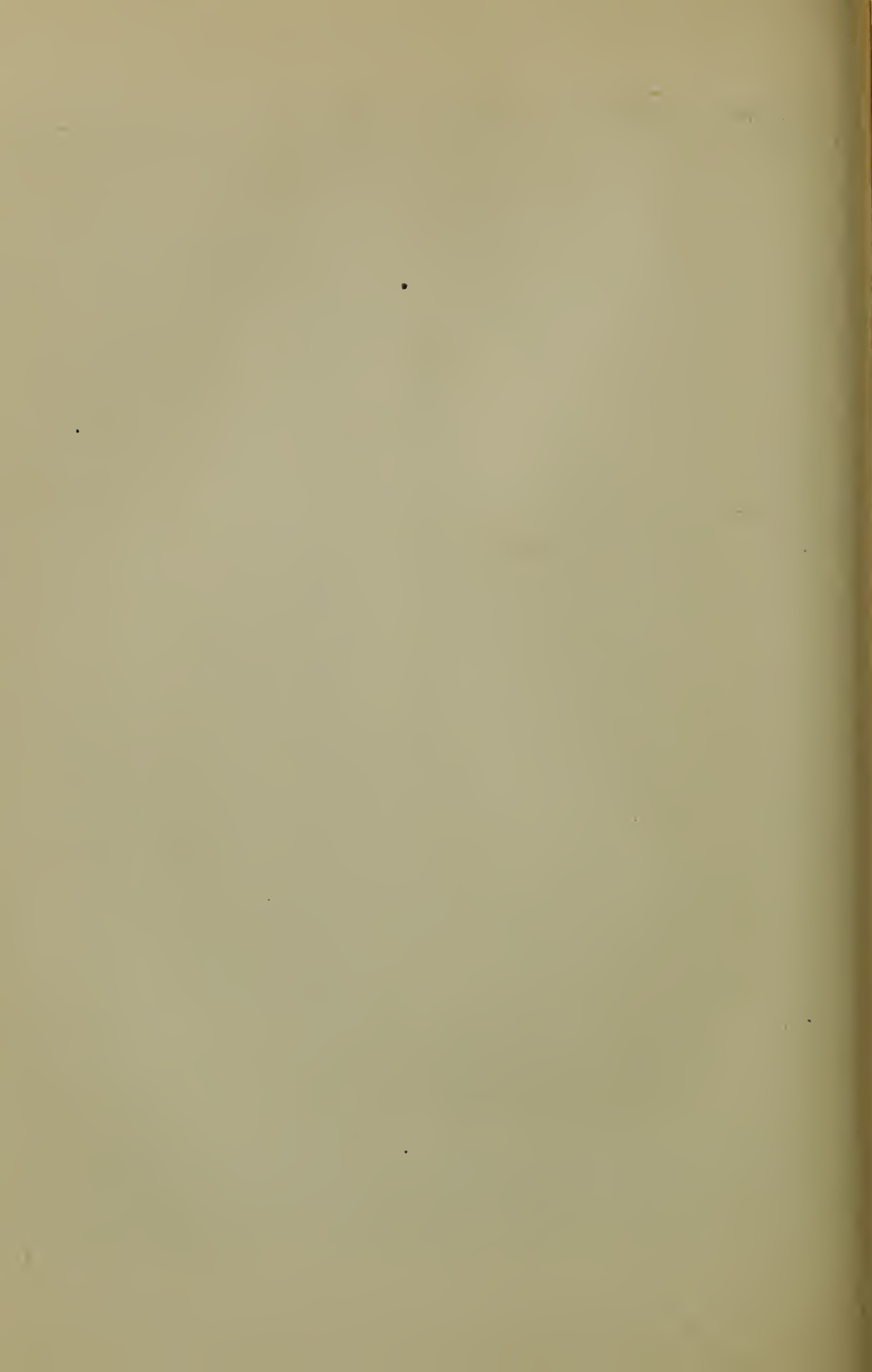
WINDOW IN THE CAMPANILE OF SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE











## II

WE climbed the Campanile many times, and sat for hours sketching among the bells, great green fellows, beautiful in shape, as good bells are, beautiful, too, in their simple decoration which time has aided. They swing from their vermilion beams, in a sort of cage near the tower's top, and just behind the upper part of Talenti's windows, so that levers and tackle thrust themselves out of the marble quatre-foils, through which also one has lovely glimpses of villas, and hills, and Valdarno opening away towards Pisa. Within the Campanile, one walked upwards in the successive footsteps of Giotto, Andrea Pisano, and Francesco Talenti; Luca della Robbia has passed out of this stairway onto his scaffolding to chisel at his reliefs; Donatello has climbed here often, and on the day when they set up the Zuccone, he must have smiled complacent at his nicely calculated modelling, when he saw from the square that his broad chisel-strokes had given just the needed finish to his "Pumpkin-head."

One reached the bells by a large ladder leading from a small door in the cage, and down which one went among ropes and joists, wheels and pulleys.

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Now and then the small bells jangled, and once in two hours Campanone, the great bell, boomed; he was too big for close quarters, and when he began to vibrate before sounding, it was well to run up the ladder and sit at a more comfortable distance from his ear-splitting roar. One had to beware of the Misericordia, next in size to Campanone, as there was no telling when he might ring; so at the first annunciating stroke of certain small bells (as many pilot-fishes to the monster), canvas and easel were snatched away, lest the beam should come crashing down upon them. They were right in its path, but the custodian at the tower foot had warned us, "If there is a *disgrazia*, an accident, in the town, the *piccolezza* [small fry] will ring sharply, and then the Misericordia bell will sound fifteen times." It did sound while we were there, and below on the square we saw the black-hooded brethren collecting before the Bigallo for their errand of mercy.

If Campanone is unpleasant at close quarters, he is delightful at a distance, and few things gave us more pleasure than the bells of Florence, ringing one awake in the early morning of the summer days. At quarter of five were heard the first humming vibrations growing in a stroke or two to the incredibly deep, yet melodious booming of Campanone. The mellow double peal of Santa Croce, the *bel doppio* that Italians love, joined with it. No penitential



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tolling of American church bells was this, but a jubilant, leaping, rocking sound setting the air on fire; then the sharper-toned bells of Santa Maria Novella gave tongue, while All Saints, the Holy Spirit, the convents of the outlying hills, for a quarter of an hour swelled this concert in the upper air, till the unresonant staccato of the cracked bell of the Badia struck five, and the music died away, as it began, in a vibrant humming, felt even after it could be heard, as if the air ached with the ecstasy.

### III

IN 1890 and 91 we saw them sweep away the accretions of two thousand years from the centre of Florence, literally disembowelling the city, tearing its heart out, said some, but for us, its heart beat rather in the People's Palace of the Piazza della Signoria. The process was not a rapid one; uprooting these hovels which were often stumps of towers striking deep into the earth, was like tunnelling rock, so that we did not see it all, but we were there before pick was laid to stone; we walked for months in the thickest of the havoc and saw later the inaugural statue of the king hoisted to its place and uncovered, a new Marius among the ruins. We watched the houses rising as others sank, and finally when the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele stood spick and span, smelling of plaster and putty, we walked upon the outer edges of it, lamenting still further depredations which broke away, now a section, and now the whole side of a street, in the quarters stretching southward to the river or northward to the cathedral.

Long before the destruction began, and while the old Mercato still stood, amid a labyrinth of blind

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alleys and narrow lanes, famous by name through six centuries of history, we had heard rumors of sanification to be effected, of mighty changes to be made; then had come the question what should be done with the people who crowded these lanes and lived among the evil odors (and some agreeable ones, too, of frying polenta and roasting chestnuts), and *Progetti* began to appear upon the walls, printed in large letters under the arms of the municipality, developing a proposition to "decant" the population into new quarters which should be built outside the Porta San Frediano. At last, the destruction began, but the discussion continued; it was noised abroad that old Florence had been condemned by its own citizens; protests were signed even in England and America, until at last the Italian journals declared that the "demolition of the centre" was causing more fuss than the disputes over Fashoda or Madagascar. These petitions eventually had some effect, salutary, if perhaps only temporary; there was fierce defence of the new ordering of things, and there were fierce attacks upon it; as for us, we felt that some change was necessary, but that it was becoming too radical; that some destruction was desirable, but that there had been too much of it. No monuments having great beauty were sacrificed, but many curious buildings were swept away which, by their grouping, had yielded a picturesqueness that

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through its personality became almost a landmark, and was to every visitor essentially Florentine. A space perhaps as big as Gramercy Park, containing the Ghetto and some of the worst streets, could have been spared with advantage to everybody. Even there some few bits might have been disinfected and preserved, but there could hardly be two opinions in regard to its need of sanification.

Those who have walked in the Chiasso de' Ricci, or the Chiasso de' Erri, or indeed many other lanes of the Mercato, know a little at least of what streets of mediæval towns could be under certain conditions. The time to walk there, if one wished to sympathize with the destroyers, was when there was neither sunshine nor storm; for the sun sanified the place, and showers purified it, stirring the stagnant kennel and drawing up the ooze into the air above the eaves, that nearly met across the way. Best, that is to say worst of all, was when the air was full of water just in suspension, turning the brown walls black, and painting the houses with all the flying impurities that might pass, caught in the dust that had become momentarily slime on the stucco rubbed smooth by age, or the brick made sharp by disintegration. Stretching out the hand one might touch either side of the clammy walls; might look up the narrow black openings where the ladder-like stairs climbed to the windows, air holes,

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what you will, that had been pierced, grated, blocked up, and pierced again for six centuries, and one had some faint idea of what mediæval life was like in these lanes when typhus or the plague sat down in them to be their daily guest.

Those who know only the wide, airy streets of modern cities would find it hard to believe that life could have existed under such conditions, and many a cellar at home is dryer than were the rooms of these houses.

There are still hundreds of such streets in the mediæval quarters of European cities, hundreds such, as to narrowness, that is; but few quite so old or quite so dirty, for it is probable that one or two of the lanes destroyed followed the lines of ways which existed when Florence was an Etruscan suburb of Fiesole two thousand years ago. Why did they build so closely, the American asks himself, when Tuscany stretched away around them, and Arno opened its level valley to the hills on either side. History answers this question very shortly. The pressure of the times closed like a huge fist upon the mediæval cities, squeezing them into the smallest compass that could contain their life without stifling it; for if any of the latter slipped through the fingers of that fist, it was immediately extinguished by wolves or nobles who issued in packs from their woods or their castles, the



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former by night, the latter by day, and were stopped only by walls and towers.

And were there no peasants in the outlying country to raise the crops? Yes, while the sun was up; but upon the horizon of the peasant's field was always the brown castello, the miniature town with its ramparts, its lane for a main thoroughfare, and its alleys for streets. You may ride through such, at Buonconvento, for instance, past town hall, church, and all in two minutes, from fortified gate to fortified gate, and in these walled villages the peasants quickly shut themselves, if danger were afoot.

Some of the aforesaid robber-nobles lived in town houses about the Mercato Vecchio during the winter months until finally the people bundled them out, and truncated their tall towers to an even height of seventy feet, while all through the middle ages and the early Renaissance great families clustered in the market's neighborhood, so that as the pick tore the old houses many an escutcheon came to light in the humblest places. Most of these buildings were ugly enough, but it seemed a pity to lose the column with its statue of Abundance, the statue that had long presided over a market, which, as its fourteenth century poet declared, "bore off the palm from every other piazza;" and surely they might have preserved Vasari's columned loggia of the Fish Market, and

# FLORENCE

THE DEMOLITION OF THE CENTRE OF FLORENCE











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made it a feature of the new ordering. The massiveness of the walls, was impressive, and probably in part from the frequency of the round arch the excavations often recalled by their appearance the ruins upon the Palatine and in the Roman forum.

In the summer of 1891, the last of the Mercato was going down. Already the north side of the Via del Fuoco had disappeared, and we watched from week to week, one after another of the ancient palaces laid bare as if the common soldiers fell about them first, and they, the chiefs, died last and hardest. It was like digging up a cemetery of old warriors, exposing, as the pick struck, bit after bit of the mouldering skeletons of the battered giants that grew into being when Florence was young. Little by little their armor of brick and mortar, stone and rubble, rusted by the rains of a thousand winters, fell in rattling showers upon the growing heap of rubbish, and the whole air was thick and white with the dust of departed glory. Wounded, they had been, too, these old houses, and they were cicatrized from battlement to basement by blocked up windows, smothered loggie, blind colonnades; by all the changes that had seen war and wealth and action, deaden into peace and poverty and sloth. The great upper windows that opened wide watchful jealous eyes in the days when Guelph looked across at Ghibelline, had shrunk till the lessened

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space gave scarcely shoulder-room for frowzy gossips.

Soon all would be gone of a spot hardly less famous, hardly less populous with souvenirs than is the forum of Rome, the agora of Athens, but the air would be the sweeter and the city the healthier for its loss. The good these men of the Mercato did, lives after them in the archives of Florence; and in the statues and medallions and Robbia angels that were carried to the museum; and much evil was interred with the bones of the old houses, — evil of fever, damp, and stench, and foul deposit of centuries; nevertheless, the onlooker wished that they might not disappear so collectively and entirely. As the demolition progressed, one of the few consolations which came to those who doubted the judgment of the destroyers was, that, as houses and towers fell, new vistas were opened through the rubbish heaps: upon Or San Michele, the Strozzi palace, and especially the cathedral group. The Vecchietti palace, though just on the edge of the condemned region, was preserved; and the ermines of the escutcheon, who must have been little at ease in the dirt of the destruction, were cleaned and chiselled sharp again. The lovely, little palace-guild-house of the flax merchants stood long, like an island in a sea of rubbish, but at last it went down with the rest, and the space stretched level

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from the Art of Wool, at the southeast corner, to the Archbishopric, severed in twain, its façade yet standing just at the brink of the excavations of the northeastern end, where the last waves of destruction broke almost against the base of the Baptistery.

From his *bel San Giovanni*, the patron saint, could now look down upon rare remains of a city, or, at any rate, of a burg which had been there before ever his fame, or that of his co-patron Santa Reparata, came to Valdarno; for the pick had pierced below the Florence of Dante, even below the foundations of that piazza which in Lombard days was called the forum of the king, and had reached masonry of a time when Etruscan Fiesole ruled from the hill above, and Florence was but a tributary suburb. It was a desolate place, and the lover of Florence, in looking at it, felt as if with the disappearance of a quarter grimy with dirt, but almost peerless in its historic interest, pages upon pages had been torn from her history.

Internequine battle had hammered most of the beauty out of these old houses; exhalations and deposits had fouled them; civic jealousy had lopped the towers with which the place once bristled like a porcupine; and even the stones looked leprous and blistered. Yet these same stones had once based towers and walled palaces; among them

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Dante walked; Medici, bought and sold before Cosimo, the elder, was born, and long-gowned merchants prepared the wool which made Florence so famous, and so rich that the Florentine prisoner paid double ransom. Through these lanes, the Caroccio of the Republic rolled, with the banner of Florence at the mast, her best fighting men stationed upon it, its oxen and its driver clad alike in scarlet, while behind upon its car, the Martinella, the war-bell, clanged unceasingly. These were the narrow ways which Guelph and Ghibelline barred with chains, which the fighting Corso Donati held Horatius-like; in the little piazza, near by the Flax Guild, Ginevra of the Amieri had shivered in her grave-clothes upon her kinsman's door-step begging for shelter. The whole procession of the middle ages passed through these streets; and Charles of France found them so dangerous and threatening that he gave up all thought of twisting Marzocco's tail, and passed on to other and more easily mastered cities. In his time, famous artists walked the quarter: Ghirlandajo and Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and many another; there were shops of famous craftsmen in the Calimala, and very much to talk of and to write of, so that to-day there is a sad gap in the guide-books at the pages where was once Mercato Vecchio, and where is now Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele. Before the quarter was laid wholly flat portions of

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it began to rise again. We had hopes and fears; our fears came from what we had seen in the new streets of Rome, so did our hopes in part, for if much is bad in the Roman renewal, something is good, but, above all, it was fair to expect much from the examples which Florentines had all about them in streets that had been spared. In few cities is the type so admirable of private houses and semi-military palaces of Podestà or Gonfaloniere, whether of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth century. Even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the native purity and elegance of taste, together with the influence of older palaces, obtained so strongly, that there resulted a sobriety of architecture, foreign to the epoch in the rest of Italy, so that Florence, until "the demolition of the centre," had, within its antique limits, hardly a building to which the word "vulgar" could be applied.

The older palaces are austerity itself; and as one goes among them day after day, the taste is insensibly elevated; it is like living with Dante among books; and, in later times as well, the citizen was austere, if we compare his house with the more luxuriantly sculptured dwelling of his Gothic contemporary. He never tried to impose by richness of general decoration; but he loved weight and mass; he left the splendor of stone lacework to the northern contemporaries of Jacques Cœur and



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Louis XII., but *his* house should rise like a cliff, ponderous, enduring, and sombre.

He never thought of sally, — a cube or a rectangle circumscribed his desires, but upon the vast flat surface of that rectangle, the ornament should be applied with true Tuscan feeling for proportion, and with that exquisite sense of quantity and fitness hardly excelled by the Greeks; while his ornament, what there was of it, should be elegant, original, and suited to the height. First of all, this true Etruscan would set his house upon a foundation that might hold up Babel, and laying the huge stones in their courses, he rough-hewed them into a grand bossage, — the only decoration fit for such a pedestal to such a house. Through this bossage, he opened windows like breaches in a city wall, then closed them again with heavy gratings, each one an immovable portcullis. A simple, round-arched door, oaken and studded with nail-heads as big as the fist, led to the central court-yard; above the bossage, the flat wall opened in a series of windows, round-topped, divided by a single mullion or colonnette, and presenting over double arches, surfaces filled gracefully with a *fleur-de lys* or other ornament. Few decorative shapes could be simpler, hardly any could be more pleasing than these windows which characterize the brown streets of Florence, climb the hills of Siena, or line the

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curving river at Pisa. Last of all, he terminated his palace by a grand cornice, and produced such buildings as the Strozzi and Medici palaces, the full expression of Tuscan civic art, and, perhaps, the grandest dwellings ever inhabited by private citizens.

There are many other palaces ranging over a period of four centuries which are worthy of the modern builder's attention, notably two, which make the corner of the Borgo degli Albizzi and the Via del Proconsolo, and looking at them the visitor may wonder that with this lesson three minutes' walk removed from the new piazza Florentines did not profit more by it. Of these a fifteenth century palace, the Pazzi-Quaratesi is almost as fine as the Strozzi; while the Buontalenti, often called the Non-finito, torso though it be, and utterly different, is admirable too. It was built in 1592 in the *barocco* style, but triumphs over the *barocco* or anything which is not grand, for it has preserved the austerity of Florence through all its overweighting, and has a brown and sombre magnificence that is its own. In our long and frequent visits to Florence, we lived within a few steps of this corner, and passed it many times a day, yet never without the same strong impression, the same abiding admiration for these two palaces, which, beetling above the narrow Borgo, overhanging you with their grated windows, overshadowing you with their cornices, al-

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most shutting out the sky, thrust the huge stones of their bossage upon you, and seem to say: "You only pass here because we choose to let you."

The oldest palaces, those of the thirteenth century, are sterner even than the stern Strozzi; they stand among the later houses like fighting men with vizors down amid the grave, long-gowned scholars and lawgivers of the *quattrocento*. Their walls rise sheer and plain, sometimes to the very top of the battlements (for they often keep their merlons, square-headed, if Guelph, forked, if Ghibelline), sometimes broken at the summit by the corbelled parapet; their plainly bordered windows are but slightly recessed, and the grating sets its teeth down hard into the stone, instead of caging the whole opening, as in later palaces. Nothing can be simpler, and yet like the plain, unornamented, fighting armors nothing can be more full of character than these buildings which once filled the *primo cerchio*, and made up the passionately loved and hated Florence of Dante and of Farinata.

Two among them are incomparably finer than their fellows, and prove that if the Italian castles of the *contado* seem never to have been quite native to the country, these castle-palaces of civic communities were superbly spontaneous and original. One does not tire of the beauty of the Bargello's interior, or the Palazzo Vecchio's exterior; the stair-

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case and loggie of the former leave a lasting picture in the mind, and the great tower of the latter, seeming to spring forth from the palace-parapet like a Victory poised upon one foot, and launching itself into the air, may say to the Campanile of Giotto: "If you are the most beautiful of all towers, I am the most audacious."

With such examples before them, the builders of the new Piazza might have made it quintessentially Florentine, without sacrificing convenience to æsthetic appearance; as it is they have been contented with something not quite bad, but thoroughly commonplace. A bronze equestrian statue of Victor Emmanuel stands in the centre of the square, and behind it a sort of triumphal arch spans the Via Strozzi and affords a vista through which one may enjoy a fine view of the tail and hind legs of the horse. There are also plate-glass shop-windows and much gaslight, and the Florentine may contemplate with satisfaction (if he be Browning's person of quality),—

    "— the square with the houses, Why?  
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there 's something to  
    take the eye!  
Houses in four straight lines not a single front awry!  
Green blinds as a matter of course, to draw when the sun  
    gets high  
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted  
    properly."

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It is the consummate expression of modern Italian taste. Meantime the houses which Donatello liked to look at are gone, yes, and some stones rubbed by Dante's shoulders.

Worse still, after the new piazza had risen, the pick did not cease, but, like Lars Porsena's messengers, travelled east and west, and south and north, especially south. Hard by Or San Michele, the narrow street spanned by an arch buttressing a house in which Andrea del Sarto had his workshop, fell into rubbish heaps, and why? There was no dirt there; it was a clean little street, wide enough for the traffic that passed through it, and picturesque by reason of the corbelled and battlemented parapet that overhung its western side. One trembled for the little Piazza dei Cerchi, where Tito woke up on the day he first met Romola, and where the circlets of the arch-famous family may yet be seen on the bossage of shops that once were palaces; one feared, too, for the Piazza dei Cimatori, but fortunately they lay a little without the doomed territory. Not so the Place of the Mercato Nuovo, and a great breach was opened opposite one side of the lovely Renaissance arches; a barbarism shocking enough to make Tacca's splendid boar snarl, or to bring Cennini and the other old Florentines down from their niches upon the vandal workmen.

"Florence belongs not to *forestieri* but to Floren-



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tines, and they may do as they please," we are told. Yes, and a beautiful woman's face belongs to her; but if she tattoos her nose we all regret the most unnecessary effect of such local elaboration upon the features remaining *in statu quo*. And thus it is here, for it is the effect of all the features together that we love in Florence, and there is little need to enlarge streets where the traffic is slight. "Every one of our important buildings will be most carefully preserved," they tell us; yes, we reply, but it is not the buildings isolated and ticketed as curiosities, but standing in the midst of their homelier, but characteristic and contemporary environment that we wish to see; if Ghiberti's gates and Brunelleschi's Dome draw us to Florence, it is the general character of the city that makes us linger there. The little streets are so familiar to the Florentine that they are dull to him; he does not always realize their interest, but even he will admit, when his attention is roused, that a butterfly against its native landscape is handsomer than when impaled in a box, even though the opportunity for examination be greater in the latter case. Not all Italians need convincing; the country is full of patient and enthusiastic students of her monuments; there are local and national societies, and nowhere have the remains of the past been more exhaustively photographed than in Italy. Learned societies,

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backed by the foreign signers of petitions, have come to the aid of many a menaced street; many a quaint bit has been reprieved; Borgo San Jacopo still curves along the Arno side in its old picturesqueness; the towers of the Amedei, the Consorti, the Marsili, still break the sky-line of roofs, and the palaces of the Guelphic Party, of the Giandonati, have had a stay of proceedings granted them. The Palace of the Canacci may even be restored; the pick has ceased its labors, and at least for a while to come, we may visit not only old Florentine monuments, but what is different and better, old Florence.

# THE AGE OF PREPARATION



## THE AGE OF PREPARATION

THE word Renaissance is magical in its potentiality, and yet in hearing it we are apt to recall only the achievements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, forgetting the great age of preparation which preceded it, became merged in it, and belonged to it as utterly as childhood belongs to human development.

Italy is the daughter of antiquity, and the enduring strain of antique blood not only kept the Italian an Italian, but preserved for him, what has been his lasting birthright and inheritance from the ancient world, the sense of order, and the sense of form.

The Ostrogoths and Longobardi might hold the peninsula, as they did for five centuries; little by little they became Italian. Roman law made its own way by its own weight, and with the relative order which came thereby, the plastic sense of the old Etruscan and Greek awoke again, and began that work which eventually shaped the Renaissance.

For many hundred years, Italy was a Medea's cauldron of bloody limbs, of battle and massacre;



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but after five centuries, the charm worked, and Æson walked again, a new man, the Italian, made up of many ingredients which had been cast into the cauldron by both indigenous Latin, and Latinized barbarian. This new man was the Tuscan or the Lombard, the Ligurian or the Venetian, and in his making the northman, the barbarian, had his important part. To begin with, the sword of the northman was a ploughshare turning up for the new seeds the nearly exhausted soil of Italy, and he brought to the orderly understanding of the Roman, the imagination and the fantasy of the North. Already Italy began to show herself the mother of the arts, of modern building and of modern warfare; of building in the churches of Pisa and Lucca, of war in the revival of the infantryman, the descendant of the Roman legionary.

Upon the other battlefields of Europe, the mounted knight, the gentleman, was the soldier, the footman was hardly more than a cipher, but in Italy the burgess marched afoot, and had his own tactics. His rallying point was the *caroccio* or chariot of the city; this was a huge, wheeled platform, carrying the banner of the republic, and a score or so of her best fighting men. It was drawn by three yoke of oxen, and the choice of these beasts was strategic, for the *caroccio* was the palladium of the commonwealth; it might never under any cir-

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cumstances be abandoned by the main body of the troops, and the slow pace of the oxen absolutely prevented either a reckless pursuit of a flying enemy, or a disorderly retreat on their own part. Rallying beside his caroccio, the Italian became the first infantryman since the days of the Roman empire, and successfully resisted the Transalpine cavalrymen.

The north of Italy was already a beehive of republican cities, whose townsmen were at once traders, artisans, sailors, and soldiers. The north belonged to itself; the south belonged to the Normans, for the eleven sons of Tancred de Hauteville had left their farm upon the English channel, had gone to Calabria and Sicily, and had earned, every one of the eleven, a crown or a coronet. Theirs seemed a fantastic kingdom made up of Italians, Campanians, Greeks, and Arabs, but it was solid and fruitful and full of potential importance to Italian cultivation; for the rule of the Norman French made relations with Southern France frequent, and Southern France was the convenient highway to Mohammedan Spain, where centuries of Arab civilization had stored up a whole reservoir of learning that was ready to pour out upon the fields of Provence.

In this prologue to the Renaissance we may broadly distinguish two epochs: first, that of the

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fight for independence, of the burgs against the emperor; next, of the internal struggle of city with city. Coeval with these strifes, we have the rise of architecture, sculpture, and painting.

North and South of Italy were alike claimed by the German Kaiser, who, as inheritor of Charlemagne's empire, called all men his vassals and made them such, if he were able. The old and fixed German idea was that to the successors of the great Charles belonged the iron crown of Monza, the homage, the lands, and the money of their Italian subjects. Equally fixed was the Italian idea that Cæsar might have the crown and the homage, and be welcome to them, but might not have the rest! So settled was this conviction in the Italian mind that not cities razed could raze *it*; for, with a red glare in the north, Milan, the protagonist of Liberty, became its protomartyr, as, levelling houses and churches, Barbarossa sent his ploughshares over her. Scattering its citizens among the neighboring towns, the unwitting Cadmus-Cæsar sowed the dragon's teeth of independence; for as the fugitive told, from the Alps of Savoy to the Lagoons, his tale of two years' battle and hunger, there sprang up, fully armed, for every Milanese, ten townsmen of whatever place might be, and where Verona, Vicenza, Padua opened the way, city after city entered into line, and Pope Alexander himself headed

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the crusade against the German, and stood god-father to the city hastily built to hinder Frederic. The fight came at Legnano, where the burghers had a new caroccio, in place of the one which the emperor broke up at Milan, and where, by the help of the blessed Saint Ambrose, and of the "cohort of Death" which fought about the chariot, they had their revenge and captured the very buckler of the Cæsar. And so Italy was fairly launched in the struggle for liberty which should not end till Pope and Emperor had broken each other, and Manfred lay dead in the Garigliano, and the burghs had conquered freedom to cut each other's throats!

Almost before the first great act in this age of preparation, the act of the achieving of independence was completed, there commenced, with even bitterer blows than were struck at Legnano, the struggle between the spirit of free inquiry and the spirit of dogma. For the tree of knowledge began to tempt men, and before it, with fire and sword, stood stubborn guardians, Innocent the Pope, Dominic the Saint, and many another. "The fruit thereof is evil and whoso eateth shall die," said these high priests militant; and the kings and people believed them, for the tree had been pretty well windswept, and the Ostrogothic and Lombard centuries had made such a scarecrow of it that it might indeed look a very upas.

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But the spirit of inquiry was abroad, and now came Doubt riding from Provence, clad in so many guises that weapons could hardly touch it, or watchfulness spy it out: Doubt clad as troubadour, thinking that life is pleasant; as artist, seeing that the world is good to look at; as poet, singing its beauties; Doubt crystallizing into Science under the gaberdine of a Jewish physician, with the wisdom of the Arabs in his saddle-bags, and coming to be publicly proscribed, and secretly enriched, by his noble patients. From Sicily, where Roger the Norman had long expected it, since his mother country of Montferrat had Provence at its ear, advanced another army of Doubt, troubadours, singers, poets. Nothing could hold them in check, though Dogma did its best; the Inquisition flashed a new and dreadful name in letters of fire upon the sky of Southern France at Albi; the Mendicant orders trooped to the rescue, brown Franciscans did kindly ministry in the cottages of the poor; Dominicans, in the palaces of the rich, fought fire with fire, and Science was confuted by scholasticism and learned argument, by doctors mystic, doctors angelic, doctors seraphic.

All was useless, the army of doubters, turned the great fortress of Rome, and altogether converged upon Tuscany the land of the olive, and of promise. And this was the second act of the drama, the



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*toscaneggiamento*, the Tuscanizing of Italian, the converting of dialects into a language; all these rebecs and viols of Sicily, these zitherns and psalteries of Provence, in the hands of trouvères and of troubadours, were to play in unison the prelude to that mighty chant of Dante which a half century later was to sing of Heaven and Earth in the first modern language. It was an age of love poetry and concetti; the boughs of the tree of knowledge began to fill with singing birds of gayest plumage; hawks and hounds went with the troubadours; cunning dresses adorned them, for man, who had been for centuries a bristling hedgehog of steel and iron points, had become a peacock, and strutted in his new-found feathers. If this seems somewhat futile, at least it was fair to look at, as the mediæval pageants threaded the boughs, and Guido here and Guittone there sung among the branches, like the little figures that nestle with strange viols and psalteries and opened lips among the deeply carved leaves of the capitals of early churches. Only a century later, after this rustling of spring leaves, there came the rustle of leaves of another kind, up and down the length of Italy and from far-away convents of Germany and Switzerland, the rustle of parchment and palimpsest. For the sap had stirred in the roots of the tree that stretched away to Byzantium and to Greece; man

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had got the book of knowledge wide-open again, and was trying to spell; soon he read, and the peacock become eagle soared straight at the sun.

But before this outburst, the new birth, which ended the drama of preparation, there came an interlude of iron music. It was the age of Dante and Boccaccio, but it was an age of uncontrollable spirit, and while men argued and disputed, while the students filled the schools, their swords filled the streets with brawls.

Hardly had the Lombard League hung up the hacked blade and dinted shield, than contemporaneously with the struggle between inquiry and dogma, the internecine strife of the burghs, the battles within the walls, began. Guelph and Ghibelline had ceased to mean Pope and Emperor, but they fought as fiercely as ever. Beginning in Florence at the foot of Mars's column by killing the lover almost before his bride, they carried their arms to Pistoja, Siena, all parts of Tuscany, watering the plant of hatred with blood of kinsmen and brothers. Mounting upon the circling whirlwind of party vengeance to the destruction and insult of all things sacred and profane, they dragged the citizen from his home, the home from its soil, the huge palace from its base, at length tearing God from the cross, "because He turned His head to the Guelphic side." Consider the Tus-

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cans, the chosen people of the arts and letters; interdicts, fire, flood, sieges, battles in the field, in the street, destruction by wholesale and by detail, did their abounding life withstand. Trading throve apace, salamander-like, in a blazing Tuscany; property was destroyed, and money piled itself up withal; whole quarters of the cities crashed to the ground beneath the blows of Neri and Bianchi, and while axe, mace, and sword were playing upon each other about their very bases, wonders of architecture arose,—the Campanile of Giotto, Or San Michele, the townhalls of Gubbio and Pistoja and Volterra, and those twin towers of Florence and Siena, the Vecchio and the Mangia, true flowers of the soil, that strange soil into which modern art, vital and unconquerable, intertwining itself with “the blood-red blossom of war,” struck deep root. How were hands found to do and undo so much? A war with the great despot of Verona reduced the Florentines to the utmost straits; no sooner was it over, than they fell to fighting among themselves to keep their hands in. Arno itself attacked the city, and one terrible night the river rushed fathoms deep through her streets, leaving her open and defenceless, with a half mile breach in her walls; hardly were the stones dry, when the swords were out again. The plague of 1348 visited her with such horrors as one does not like to think of; the

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plague ended, she gave thanks in her churches, and planned an expedition against Siena.

To the mediæval Italian, political economy meant civic aggrandizement, and aggrandizement in those days wore the sword and used it; prosperity meant crops in one's own *contado*, silks and woollens in one's own warehouses, burnt crops in the enemy's country, and craftsmen out of work in her streets; political liberty meant civic autonomy at home, and as much damage, dissension, and intrigue as possible in other cities. Expeditions of town against town succeeded each other; there were grotesque insult and bloody battle; Lords of Lucca running the Pallone, the foot-ball race, under the walls of the besieged; the "useless mouths" forced pitilessly out of the gates, and beaten back by the besiegers, to starve in the ditches; candidates for election were thrown from windows, and "the free vote" of the burghess was controlled by sword and lance. Once the shadow of Visconti, the great Duke of Milan, loomed so large and near that partisans trembled and united in the Tuscan cities; the shadow passed away into death, all hearts were relieved and all hands fought merrily again. Florentine gentlemen went to pacify distracted Pistoja, and finding the game of assassination too fascinating to be resisted, killed each other as generously as did the natives.

It is all easy to conceive as one walks the lanes

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of that *primo cerchio*, which Dante sang and Farinata saved. Too great success upon the market, or above all at the elections, had made others look with lowering faces upon the favored candidates, until the lucky white beans had given office to so many Donati or Cerchi that the palaces of Buondelmonti and Amieri fairly boiled with pent-up party hatred. Then there would be the spark to the train, when young lads of either family met by chance, perhaps in some narrow way by the Calimala where passage without jostling was impossible, and when swords lay so loose in their sheaths that jostling shook them out. Blows would be struck, and in the little street the cry would go up that the factions were out again. From the stone counters of the open-air shops the pieces of woollen, the gold and silver trinkets, were hastily drawn in, and the wooden shutters met behind the gratings. Passers caught up their children onto their shoulders, and hurried into the side streets, looking fearfully behind them for the rush of men and horse that might come when the news had passed up Por Santa Maria to the Amieri, or down to the piazza of the Donati, and had set the fierce Corso on horseback. Into the little piazza itself, where the allied palaces stood back to back, and whose ponderous outer doors had clanged to at the first alarm, poured a stream of



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cousins and brothers; the women were at the windows; the lackeys bringing the light, open helmets to their masters, or buckling the cuirasses. Some of the lads were already on horseback, waiting for no armor, and would fight bare-sark, like that young Astorre Baglioni whom Raphael saw holding the Perugian street, a glorious and unwitting model for his warrior saints. But the horses were few, even the great houses did not stable many, the streets were slippery and the chains dangerous, for the chains, too, at the first thought of attack, had been dragged out by the lackeys and hooked into the staples on either side of the street-opening; while behind them a group of pikemen, sheltered by the angle of the way, stood ready to break the first rush of the adverse faction, till the bowmen in the windows above should thin them out. Meantime the white-haired chief of the family, head and captain of some such fighting race of merchants as the Bardi or Peruzzi, climbed the stairs to loggia or tower, since the hand that wrote bills of exchange could direct a mangonel cunningly, and the eyes which were keen for the glitter of gold could spy, too, the glint of an enemy's steel as it approached through the narrow ways.

Such was the tempest which beat upon the cradle of Italian art, yet through it all, the artists went and came; Niccolà fortified at Naples for Charles

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of Anjou and at Gaeta for the Pope, carved votive images for robber barons and pulpits for robber prelates; Giotto, threading the battles and slaughters from north to south, painted the story of a pitying Saviour, not fearing to set Faith, Hope, and Charity upon the walls of the city of Ezzelino the cruel.

Never were line and compass, brush and chisel more active. Arnolfo made Florence over again; and Siena took her present shape; Cimabue and Giotto journeyed over the mountains of Umbria, and spent long months under the heavy arches of Saint Francis at Assisi; an angel population crowded the walls of Italy,—angels which began to move their arms and bodies, and seemed so beautiful to a naïf and earnest age, that Borgo Allegri took its new name as the youths and maidens bore, like a great banner, the Madonna of Cimabue to the transept of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Gaddi and Memmi, in the same church, covered the chapel of the Spaniards with frescoes; Spinello painted at Arezzo, the Lorenzetti in Pisa and in their native city of Siena; thus, amid the havoc of war, beauty began to form itself into lasting shapes, and as in ancient pictures lovely ladies sit against tapestries of fighting men and monsters, against the discord the Vita Nuova and the pictures of Giotto arose and lived, and in the intervals of the trumpet's blaring, one heard the throbbing of the lutes.



**MANTUA**





# MANTUA

## I

BEHIND wide stretches of pale-green water, now flat and glassy, now lightly ruffled, Mantua rises in long silhouette of parapeted, tile-capped brick work, lovely with a silver-gray bloom born of the marsh damp. Against the sky are the towers and the curved dome of Alberti's church. In front, at the water's edge, the town is buttressed by the bulk of the Gonzaga's castle, so vast that all the shining water seems but its moat, the head of the long bridge but its barbican. It is a moat, however, upon which the lateen-rigged boats may sail till they reach the Mincio, then onward to the Po and that delta which will take the traveller southward to Ravenna, or northward to Chioggia, Torcello, and Venice.

Florence and Venice were both nursery and marketplace; Mantua was neither, nor was it the seat of local patrons spending the local earnings upon the fostering of native pride. The master of Mantua went afield for his fortune, but devoted his fighting wages to the arts as liberally as to his hired soldiery, and brought back honestly acquired spoil from the

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studios of North and South, until the great Marchioness, the Marchesana Isabella, became the archetypal collector of the Renaissance. Gianfrancesco and Lodovico had preceded her, and masters came to them as well as masterpieces. For Gianfrancesco worked Pisanello, the medallist, whose people of bronze seem so fleshlike, whose painted people so metallic, and Alberti, the wizard of the early Renaissance, the precursor of Leonardo. To Lodovico came Mantegna, and to his children, Giulio Romano and Primaticcio.

Thus, the Florentine and the Roman, the Paduan and the Veronese, have dowered the city, and have given to the Gonzaghe a glory which their swords could not gain. Much of that concrete glory is gone: burned, or stolen in the German sack; sold to rich customers beyond the Alps, or mouldered off the walls in the marsh vapors. But much remains: the Church of Alberti; the frescoes of Mantegna; the ceilings of the Reggia; the palaces of Giulio; the *stucchi* of Primaticcio, — and these are the things that the wise tourist comes to see in Mantua. Yet there is more; there is the city itself, which takes its place in the long chain of unending surprises, the chain in which no one link is like another in this inexhaustible Italy.

Mantua has changed greatly in the last quarter of a century, thanks to the blessed, moving water that

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is everywhere, and which means Power. In streets which were dark and dull twenty-five years ago, electric lights abound and yield a factitious moonlight, as if Manto, the eponymous witchmother, were abroad with her magic ; bicycle advertisements flaunt in gay colors upon the old walls ; modern wonders these, both cycle and incandescent bulb, that would tempt Alberti to rise from his grave to study them. Our old albergo had a bright red damsel "scorching" pasted flat upon its front door ; a furnace warming the rooms ; and, chief of all wonders, a modern system of plumbing. We should not have been more surprised to have found P. Virgilius Maro among the arrivals upon the guest-book. Authors have written of "stagnant Mantua." "*Ma pur si muove.*" The five courts of the Reggia stagnate surely enough, but the court-yard of our "Golden Eagle" was lively with commercial travellers, comers and goers by the railway which is but recently become a through line, and contributes not a little to the increased animation of the place. In a hundred ways one sees that this is no longer the Mantua which seemed fainting of inanition and marsh poison, when we saw it only a short fifteen years ago, but a reviving town with potentialities.

We arrived on market day, and our hostelry was upon the Via Sogliari, which, with even more than the usual picturesque irregularity, zigzags through

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the town between yellow-washed arcades on handsome columns, like a meandering stream of light and color, widening now and again into bays, which are the Piazze delle Erbe, di Dante, di Sordello, and where men in cocked hats and wide trousers under their long aprons looked as if they had stepped out of so many Piranesi engravings. The Piazza delle Erbe was full of these comic-opera supers, and of vegetables and huge toadstool-like umbrellas as well, the clock tower with its quaint dial overlooking them all. The Piazza Dante has Alberti's Church of Sant' Andrea; while the Sordello holds the Cathedral and the Reggia Gonzaga, the pile which before and after all others is interesting in Mantua.

## II

EVERY town in Italy was in a way art-producing ; yet we can roughly divide her cities into creators of art and collectors of art like Florence, Venice, Siena, where the people themselves were a source, a well-spring, or Rome, Milan, Mantua, where the throne was a magnet. The cruel despots of Padua and Verona built and adorned ; the enlightened despots of Urbino and Mantua built and adorned too, but added the culture which comes only to tolerance and relative freedom. Urbino taught the courtly graces in Luciano da Laurana's palace, and gave them to Europe in Castiglione's Cortegiano ; but Mantua, behind the defences of her marshlands, outlived the little beleaguered mountain-duchy, had more money and more time to buy pictures and statues, and shared even the Cortegiano, since there is a Castiglione palace on the Sordello Square, and Baldassare's body is in the votive church of Santa Maria Alle Grazie. Thus, the Reggia, the castle, stands for the culture of Mantua ; and when we try to realize the great Marchioness, we think of her as throned here among the marshes, a kind of Mariana Isabella in this moated Gonzaga grange which stretches away, cov-



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ering a whole quarter of the town ; enclosing five vast courts, overhanging now the water, now the Gran Piazza ; battlemented and towered, holding its private church and chapels ; a great rambling, damp, decaying, deserted, yet splendid castle-palace of the Gonzaga, Imperial Vicars, Captains, Marquises, and Dukes of Mantua.

For all the marsh damp, one breathes more freely here than in many another castle. Souvenirs of the dungeons and poisons of Ferrara give way to pleasanter thoughts, for the memory of a good man, of Vittorino da Feltre, best of humanists, hovers like a benediction over the place. When he came to the great palace to teach, he left to the little lords of Mantua their swords and shields, for, like their cousins Montefeltro of Urbino, they should be *condottieri* from father to son ; he taught them polite letters as well, for south of the Alps in the middle *quattrocento*, *noblesse obligeait* to many things besides fighting. The spirit of the times dabbled in printing and painting, music, poetry, theatricals, architecture most of all, and the Marquis, since he must needs incarnate that spirit, should be dilettante at home and collector abroad ; but besides these acquirements which the epoch and their station imposed, besides the Latin poems of fourteen-year-old Gian Lucido, "the beautiful Greek" of ten-year-old Cecilia, the princely pupils

## MANTUA

learned something else. The man who in an age of grasping, sycophantic, foul-mouthed scholars had opened a free school in Padua for poor students, taught his Mantuan lordlings that not all contemporaneous methods were good; that treaty-breaking, stealing fortresses by murdering their captains under a flag of truce, and poisoning cardinals at one's own dinner-table, were ungentlemanly practices. Such teaching may not strike the modern mind as radical, but it wrought sensibly in the *quattrocento*; and the Marquises of Mantua grew up to "ride and draw the bow" as well as their fellows of Ferrara and Milan, and "to speak the truth," at least somewhat more frequently than the latter. That they fought manfully, the field of Fornovo, where seven Gonzaga lay dead after the battle, could testify, and their glory as enlightened rulers is dimmed by fewer treasons and tragedies than were seen by the castles of the Estensi and Sforza.

Isabella herself was Estense, but she was a born *connaissanceuse* as well, and what a time and what a treasure she had to choose in and from! She had Mantegna at her hand to select antiques for her, and would even condescend to wheedle or bully him out of things which he had bought for himself; she set on her cardinal brother to watch the young Michelangelo's career in Rome, and surprise, if possible, the secret of the buried Cupid; she sat in

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the jewel-casket-like rooms of her Paradiso, and prepared long-winded instructions framed by attendant humanists for the worriment of painters who composed her allegories; she carefully measured with her own hands the wall panels of her Grotta, and, trusting to no figures, sent ribbons of the exact length to Perugino, accompanying the aforesaid instructions. Let us hope that the ribbons did not shrink before arrival, or the instructions swell after the composition was traced upon the panel. She had Leonardo for her visitor, and Titian for her portrait painter, and, to her honor as a *connaissseuse*, she recognized the talent of a Correggio when a Bembo, with all his assumption of art knowledge, passed him by unheeding. She sent to Aldus for new editions, read the first printed Decameron, and patronized Ariosto and Castiglione; did ever a ducal blue-stocking have so royal a time? Surely in the world of arts and letters "*oncques ne fut jamais plus triomphante princesse.*" And though she was Estense by blood, and Gonzaga only by marriage, the palace seems most of all hers, even if many of the decorations left there now were executed a generation later, for her son whom we see as a curly-headed boy in Raphael's school of Athens.

In most of the great buildings which have fallen into decay,—ruined abbeys, churches, temples,—

FLORENCE

UFFIZI

LEONARDO DA VINCI

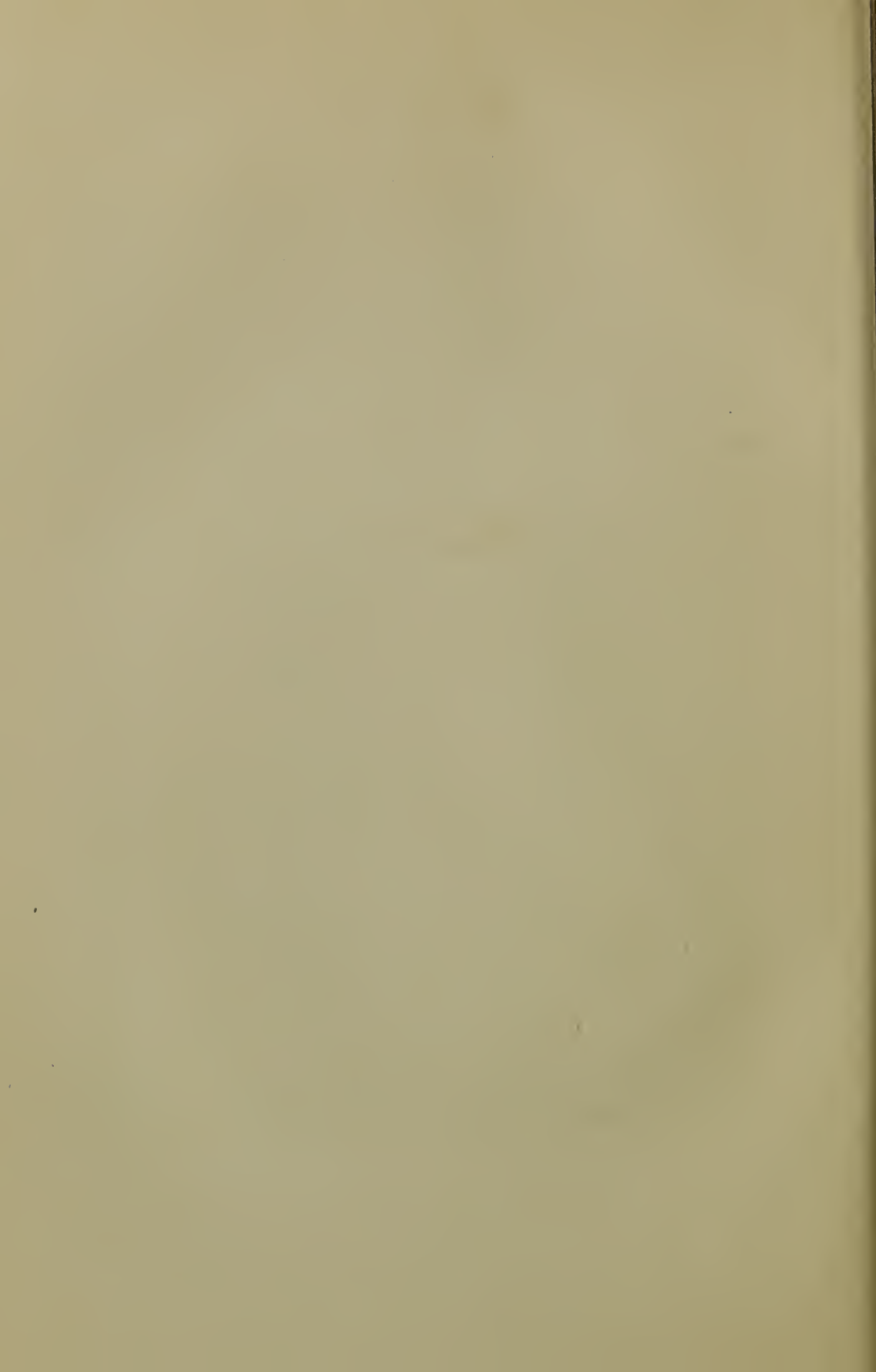
PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA D'ESTE











## MANTUA

the roof is the one thing sure to be absent. In the Ducal Palace of Mantua, the ceilings are the things which remain *in situ*, and sometimes quite unchanged, and these ceilings, with their sculptures, bosses, and medallions, and scroll-work patterns on frieze and cornice, are an unending delight as one passes from chamber to chamber and wonders at the "spacious times" of the Renaissance, at the Italian audacity which balked at nothing where height and breadth counted, and which makes the frame of modern life seem scamped and confined. This large freedom of Renaissance life is recognized everywhere in Italy, and remembering Roman, Florentine, Genoese palaces, one may not make one city yield precedence to another; still nowhere else does the line of splendidly carved wooden ceilings stretch out so interminably as here; it seems as if provinces must have been denuded of timber for the material and ingots of gold hammered into leaf to cover them; literally, the chisels of three centuries were active here.

Other Italian cities possess finer situations, finer architecture, finer pictures than Mantua: nowhere is there such a series of ceilings; not often pictured like those of the Venetian Ducal Palace, which are merely gorgeous frames to canvases of Veronese and Tintoretto, but real ceilings where the stucco work and decorative carving form the main motive.

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Such daintily rich cofferings are not to be seen elsewhere; such bracketing and such delicate cornices; such infinite convolution of tiny scroll-work, of gold upon gold, or gold on blue, picked out at times with red, white, and black. They have been a treasure-trove to the decorators of our own times, but to describe them is useless; they must be visited, or at least seen in photographs. A cursory description of the rooms takes up many pages of the local guide, and the traveller through the Reggia, making each time a "circular trip" and under guidance, is too bewildered by the vastness and the number ("there are five hundred rooms," says the *custode*, "a visit to all would take the day, for only the most remarkable are shown") to remember their sequence, either topographical or historic.

Duke Vincenzo I. rendered the topography puzzling by joining the divided portions of the older castle in several places, making labyrinth yet more labyrinthine; and all semblance of historic sequence is deceptive, for seventeenth and eighteenth century princes have overlaid the work of *quattrocento* predecessors. The place is a monument to that first and last passion of sovereigns, the love of building. Guido Bonacolsi in the fourteenth century raised what became the nucleus of the Reggia; the first Gonzaga drove him out of it and

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Francesco, fourth of his race, brought the citadel, the *rocca*, into being. Lodovico, second Marquis, invited Mantegna and Alberti to his court, and in the great hall of the Bonacolsi wing gave hospitality to that Papal Council which Pius II. called together, and Pinturicchio celebrated in his fresco of the Sienese Library. Francesco, husband of Isabella d'Este, added Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar to the decorations of the Reggia, and his wife built the beautiful apartments called La Grotta and Il Paradiso. Federigo, proclaimed Duke by Charles V., added to the castle, in honor of his new dignity, the apartments called those of the Trojan Cycle, and when he fell heir to still another title—that of Marquis of Montserrat—he again celebrated it in brick and mortar, laying out the Cavallerizza, the court-yard for jousts and tourneys, and building the great gallery called the Mostra. The vast and splendid pile was not yet big enough for Duke Vincenzo I. (1587–1612), who nearly ruined the state by his extravagance, and added gardens, galleries, and corridors, where Rubens was among his guests and must have found not a little to admire.

The family blood was beginning to run out as well as the family money. Francesco II. reigned only a few months, yet found time to make the great Mostra gallery over again. Vincenzo II. lasted but a year, but made terrible inroads upon the treas-



## ITALIAN CITIES

ures of the Reggia, selling to Charles I. of England pictures by Titian, Tintoretto, Correggio, and del Sarto. Perhaps it was as well, for three years afterwards came the horrible pillage of Mantua, a legendary sack, where the descendants of Frundsberg's *Lanzknechten* remembering the traditions of Prato and Wallenstein's *Reiter*, emulated the brutalities of Bourbon's soldiers. "What they could not carry away, they destroyed," and much of the gauntness of the Reggia of to-day dates from that terrible year 1629.

But the passion for building would not down; it was even catching, and infected the "wise and brave" French princess, Marie de Nevers, for the Nevers had succeeded the extinct elder branch of the Gonzaga. Her husband had unwittingly saved Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar, by selling the panels to Charles of England just before the siege. Marie restored the Reggia, as well as she could, and, abandoning the rooms looking on the lake, dug up the art treasures which had been buried to save them from the artillery that had battered the Reggia from the height of San Giorgio. Finally, nothing daunted by the ruin that had gone before, nowise willing to fall below the elder branch in her honoring of great traditions, she added to the palace the grand staircase which still ushers in the visitor.

They were a brave race of builders surely, the

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Gonzaga, with the ruling passion strong even in death. Ferdinando Carlo, the last Duke, wished, by added constructions, to turn the whole Reggia into a prodigious parallelogram, but the money going to the war-fund, the war turning against him, he was driven from Mantua, and died in Padua, but not until, thinking last of all of his beloved palace and his precious works of art, he had divided among the Mantuan churches, corporations, and his private friends, more than nine hundred pictures, besides marbles and smaller objects, lest they should fall into the hands of his enemies.

Mantua, which had always been fief of the Empire since Henry VIII. made a Bonacolsi Imperial vicar, was now Austrian, in and of the Empire. Under Maria Theresa, the great gallery called the Hall of the Rivers, *Sala dei Fiumi*, was painted by Giorgio Anselmi, and Mantua, for a time, bustled with building of all kinds. The double eagle, however, was soon followed by the more normal bird with a single head, which surmounted the banners of Eugène Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy. Then, the Austrians came back again, damaging the frescoes by bad restoration, turning the upper rooms into political prisons, the *Cavallerizza*, *Stivali*, *Mostra*, *Troia*, and *Scuderie*, into barracks, renting to private families the apartments of the *Paradiso* and the *Grotta*, and doing little but evil in this darkest hour

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that preceded the dawn of Italian liberty. In 1866, Mantua re-entered the great Italian family, and at once the Augean stable was cleansed of Austrian leavings, the palace was put under the care of a commission for the preservation of national monuments, the whitewash was removed from frescoes, and commemorative monuments and busts arose upon all sides.

The modern æsthete is wont to shudder with horror at Italian restoration, and to call all Italian taste bad after 1580 or so; but has any other race of men since the Greeks ever felt more strongly or continually the need about them of that beauty which art brings, than the branch of the human family to which these Mantuans belonged? In this succession of rooms, covering four centuries of endeavor, so often, alas! brought to naught, it is hopeless to attempt description: certain *ensembles* here, certain details there, remain as pictures in the memory and can be recorded. In the main there is the impression of the endless *enfilade* of rooms; some of them are remarkably high in proportion to their size, many of the halls are *cinquecento* as to ceiling and for six feet down or so, and below that are in the style which we call Empire. The combination is not a bad one, for the stucchi of Primaticcio are the very prototypes of those of the Canova-David epoch. The younger Lorenzo Costa's Zodiacal signs,

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painted in the hall named from them, have the decorative quality that is inseparable from the subject, and a certain impressiveness as well. The Trojan Cycle of Giulio Romano, on the contrary, is made up of grinning, gesticulating figures; according to the local guide, Giulio's "immortal pencil is here "worthy to vie with Homer's and Virgil's verse;" but the opinion will hardly be shared by the transalpine tourist.

All of the great rooms murmur "*sic transit*," but some of them owe their interest to a specific regret felt by the traveller; among these is the *Saletta* of the twelve Emperors, painted by Titian, and the room in which nine empty panels mark the place where Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar, of which the artist wrote, "I really am not ashamed to have painted them," once wound about the walls. Other rooms stand out by the conspicuous richness, originality, or elegance of their ceiling and frieze decoration and carving. But there is so much to study that in each visit the head is finally tired, and one is glad to go to the windows of the Mostra and to the warm, damp, yet sun-filled air of the Cavallerizza, the handsome, oblong court where grass now springs, and where once the horses trampled in the tourney or galloped at the quintain. A more intimate and sympathetic place, even in its ruin, is the diminutive "hanging garden," where in tiny tombs Duke

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Federigo laid away the dogs and little birds, "*Che delle molte sue razze erano a lui i piu cari*;" and where the lover of animals will certainly record, among his Mantuan memories of Mantegna and Isabella and all the rest, the name of the "little dog Oriana — excellent in form, fidelity, playfulness."

Chief among the rooms of the Reggia, in artistic interest, is that called Camera degli Sposi, where three of Mantegna's frescoes are well preserved, while others are injured past the recall of even the freest restorer. Besides the famous and admirable ceiling, the well-known collective portraits of the family and friends of Lodovico Gonzaga II. are still extant. Mantegna the realist is quite different from Mantegna the painter of classical or sacred subjects, and some of these gentlemen are of a quite rare ugliness, to which, nevertheless, Andrea, like Piero della Francesca, knew how to impart stateliness and even fascination. In his putti of the ceiling, and above the doorway, Mantegna again becomes the untrammelled decorator and noble draughtsman whom we have seen in Padua, at Hampton Court, and in many galleries.

The *cinquecento* memories focalize in the two sets of apartments of Isabella d'Este, those called della Grotta and del Paradiso. Those of the Grotta were upon the ground-floor; but little is left now, only a small court-yard, one room called La Scalcheria,



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with frescoes by Giulio Romano, and a fine ceiling, the central medallion of which is attributed to Mantegna. Once, however, this suite of rooms was the apple of the great Marchioness' art-loving eye. In the Paradiso there were paintings by Andrea and Perugino and Costa; they are now in the Louvre, and show that Isabella's measuring ribbon meted out nearly equal sizes to all four. Had her part in the enterprise stopped at measurement, all would have been well; but she prescribed the subject and its disposition also, and so mixed up art and pedantry that the painters were by no means at their best, Perugino especially having shown but little aptness for the allotted task. Her trinity of Cupids must have even surpassed the pictures, if, as the records of her time say, they were by Praxiteles, Michelangelo, and Sansovino!

Isabella's Paradiso was so called by reason of the view from its windows and loggie. After Verona's girdling hills, it does not seem so much of a Paradise; but with the reeds and the water it is lovely enough, and we must not forget that the Marchioness was a calling acquaintance of the Estensi, rather than of the Veronese, and that after Ferrara's, Mantua's site would indeed seem beautiful. Verona was nearer geographically; but as the Venetian lion was no tame poodle, rather a very practical person, in spite of his wings, Isabella would

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have seen him on his own dominions rarely and very formally, so that her comparisons would have been instinctively made with Ferrara. Indeed, Mantua is quite good enough, even for an æsthetic duchess; for its stretches of pale green of the upper and middle lakes are lovely, and the marsh damp gives the tonality to the whole castle, a delicate silvery bloom upon stone and brick alike.

The four rooms which are left of the Paradiso are beautiful even in their denuded condition; they are small, and their depressed vaultings are more delicately carved than any of the other ceilings of the palace. Their wood-mosaic walls and marble jambed doors are a worthy frame to memories of the illustrious visitors, of Castiglione and Bembo, Giovio, Aldus Manutius, and so many others, who helped to make the *cinquecento* glorious among Italian epochs.

The bewildered impression left by a first visit to the Reggia nevertheless includes the sense that here is perhaps the most notable setting in Italy to the life of a reigning family; succeeding visits deepen the impression; order begins to grow out of confusion, until one feels almost able to picture to one's self this busy palace-world of four centuries ago, when the five hundred rooms were populous, and the great building was fortress, dwelling, and museum all at once.

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Let us try to see these great halls as they were on some fine spring morning early, say, in the sixteenth century. First of all, we fling back the shutters that the high rooms with wide doors, opening one into another, may swim in air and light which shall make the darkest corners transparent, and give the stuffs and metals a chance to flash back the sunshine. Then the rich tapestries must hang from frieze to dado, swept away in heavy folds from doorways by velvet pages with sleek, combed-out hair. Embossed leather may cover the lesser walls; the rooms are not filled with furniture as in modern fashion, but in each one stand a few pieces, heavy and rich, or delicate and elegant, all carven, not in a stereotyped manner, but with the free-hand work of an age which carries art and inventiveness into all that it does.

Upon scroll-work stands of beaten iron, huge copper braziers of coals, still useful to temper the keen spring air of the larger and shadier rooms, send up blue wreaths of smoke. It is a little world in itself, rooms within rooms, interests of every sort; in the ladies' apartments are lutes and psalteries and great frames for embroidery; in the library, a few scholars and ecclesiastics dispute or pull about the heavy volumes; in the ducal nursery and schoolroom, over which hangs always the beneficent memory of Vittorino, are the chil-

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dren at their books or at their dolls ; while near by, those dolls for grown people, the dwarfs, quarrel or play in a set of apartments like a large baby-house, where everything, as shown to-day to the stooping visitor, from the very low ceiling to the narrow, shallow-stepped Tom Thumb staircases, is graduated to the size of those tiny creatures.

Visitors, too, of all sorts there are waiting in antechambers, where parti-colored halberdiers stand guard at doorways : envoys from the Duke's friend, Aldus at Venice, come to show proof-sheets to the Gonzaga ; dealers in artistic rarities waiting to offer their precious wares, carefully covered that no eyes may see them before those of the curiosity-loving Duchess ; perhaps even a booted messenger from his very Reverend Highness, the Duchess' brother and Cardinal of Este, with a large-folded document containing some word about that coveted Cupid of Michelangelo. Or, if we change our dates a little and bring our characters into more absolute relation to the ceilings as they stand in their last and present carving, Giulio may be in waiting, ready to report how affairs go on in the decoration of the new hunting seat, or to thank the Duke for the gift of the horse Ruggiero. A busy and a famous man is Giulio, owner of a fine palace, his head full of projects, his *scarsella* full of memoranda for the draining of lands, the widen-

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ing of streets, the improving of Mantua generally, and very courteously he is greeted, even by the greatest lords, as the prime favorite and almost prime minister of Gonzaga should be.

Noise and clatter issue from the five great courtyards: noise from the soldiers' quarters, where the troopers lounge in their gorgeous, dirty dresses; noise from the armory, where men-at-arms are rubbing away the marsh damp always ready to eat into the long rows of harness for horse and man which hang there; noise comes from the kitchens as well, where is the white army of cooks and scullions; noise, loudest of all, ascends from the stable court-yard, where scores of horses are being saddled and where, among the baying dogs, the hawks, brought out on trays, jingle the bells on their hoods. It was a strange jumble of incongruities this palace life; the arras and books within, the hawks and dogs without, the scent of the kennel coming in through the great windows to mingle with the burning perfumes of the Sala and the smoke of the incense from the chapel, where the organ drones away at early mass before the lords ride out to hunt.

In that which is left us to-day, of the art fostered by those who led the life that we have glanced at, our inheritance of Mantegna is the most valuable; but, after his name, those of Giulio Romano and Primaticcio are worthy of



## ITALIAN CITIES

commemoration, for they were admirably skilful as architectonic composers, decorators using purely architectural motives. Before their advent, the times had changed sadly from the noble period of art-growth of the *quattrocento*. The feuds of the thirteenth century, the despots of the fourteenth, had broken the strength of the burghs, and the *condottieri* of the fifteenth had weakened them still further; the crimes of the Borgias had come and gone in an invaded and demoralized Italy, while in the conquest of Florence and the sack of Rome, common ruin and Spanish oppression had fallen upon all things.

Most of the great old Tuscan masters were dead: Donatello, Ghiberti, the Robbia had lain in their graves for three-quarters of a century, and Raphael had just been borne to his tomb. In Florence, del Sarto still painted; Parma shone with a bright light, but in Rome, under the shadow of the mighty sculptor from whom they could not escape, men drew hard, dry, contorted figures, possessing the master's faults without his grandeur or inspiration. The art tide flowed in a great wave towards Venice, for in Tuscany the best had been done.

Politically, Italy had changed hands; the Spaniard was master, but the Dukes of Mantua and Ferrara were Charles V.'s lieutenants so to them was given life and length of days. What, then, were

MANTUA

PALAZZO DEL T

GIULIO ROMANO

THE WEDDING-FEAST OF CUPID AND PSYCHE











## MANTUA

Giulio and Primaticcio to bring to these favored cities which wore gilded chains? Men had altered with the new political conditions; they had become accustomed to having beauty about them, unaccustomed to fight as hard, work as hard, think as hard, for the getting of it. They had learned to prize it, however, jealously buying and hoarding the great creations of a past, which, though immediate, was irrevocable.

Meantime the younger masters substituted for creative beauty, splendor of combination. Almost within sight of each other's campaniles, are Mantua and Padua, having upon their church and palace walls nearly the two extremes of Tuscan art in Giotto di Bondone's and Giulio Romano's frescoes. Their figures are alike ill-drawn and ill-modelled, but how different are the reasons for this analogy. Giotto's are naïf and earnest; Giulio's are clever; Giotto, strenuous and sincere, left undone what he yet had no power to perform; Giulio had behind him all the knowledge of the Renaissance; he had been schooled by the greatest of all masters of composition, and had been used by him as a right hand, but Raphael had been laid away in the Pantheon, and the pupil Giulio now left his work undone because of a plethora which he was too hurried and too careless to digest, because of a kind of *blasé* indifference which desired splendor easily acquired,

and was willing to take the more salient and easily-seized portions of what had gone before. Giulio had plenty of invention, could combine and arrange with admirable taste, and could perform tricks of unpleasantly violent fore-shortening, not very carefully executed, to the great admiration of Vasari. Hard thinking, thoughtful search after noble modelling and purity of line, he had no time for, but close by him was the inexhaustible horn of plenty of the Renaissance into which he might dip with both hands.

Desiderio, Rossellino, Civitale, and many another had taught men to bind marble garlands about entablature and column, to make frieze and architrave blossom with scroll and vine; Michelozzo had hung his grand ceiling over the vast hall of the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio; Squarcione in Padua, and Mantegna here, in Giulio's city, had diligently studied the Greek through the Roman, and given to the world the multifarious decorative detail of antique life. There was much to choose from in the immediate past, and Giulio chose well. Artistic combination he did not fail in; elegance and fitness crowned his profusion and variety, and his ducal master could boast, in the ceilings and friezes of his suites of rooms, one of the greatest and one of the last decorative triumphs of the Renaissance.

With Giulio's frescoes, it is different; movement,

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invention, and power he has, and the great tradition. It could hardly be otherwise with a man who had seen Michelangelo, Raphael, and Andrea del Sarto at work. But he wears his art easily ; he is in dressing gown and slippers, while vulgarity, coarseness, and carelessness ruin most of his effects. He had no time to study the expression of his Greek and Trojan warriors, and they contort their exaggerated features in grins of ferocity, while they throw about their limbs in violent gesticulation. As to his color, one sees in the shadows the smoke of the horrible sack of Rome, and its blood in his sanguine lights.

In the Palazzo del T., a hunting seat transformed into a palace by Federigo in 1525-35, Giulio and Primaticcio found their most notable Mantuan opportunity. The *stucchi* of Primaticcio are wholly charming. Elegance and distinction in color and design reign everywhere among them. One can hardly think of any better lesson that has ever been taught in *grotteschi*. The little panel-figures, friezes, and garlands are the precursors of Wedgwood and of Empire work in relief ; the delicacy of their color-scheme delights, and deprives their profusion of any cloying sense, so that the modern artist who visits them feels instinctively the joy which the master had in them, and wishes himself to try his hand at this seductive medium of decoration.

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Giulio, as to color and lightness of touch, is a lurdane after Primaticcio; he is coarse and heavy; yet he is a great decorative artist in his facility for the handling of varied material, and the production of really grandiose effects. The painter who was trained by Raphael comes to the surface often and again, yet much of Giulio's achievement in the Palazzo del T. partakes of the nature of the raree show, as in the case of his giants and of his salmon-colored menagerie keepers of the Psyche myth.

There is plenty of real charm, however, even if it be that of a child's storybook in the latter, and it is here that the reflection of the Farnesina pendentives, and more especially of its ceilings, is thrown upon the walls of the T. In the banquet of the gods, there is a whole *mise en scene*; nude figures, animals, still-life, fruit, flowers, an elaborate service of silver and gold plate, all under the open sky and against a sea whose shore line, stretching away like the indented coves and headlands of Sorrento, displays at intervals naked nymphs and gods who, while dangling their thick limbs in the water, watch a confused assemblage of satyrs, goats, elephants, and fawns; the idyls of Theocritus, the geography of Strabo, and the natural history of Pliny are mingled in a grand scenic *pot-pourri* of fresco.

In spite of the clumsiness, there is much that is

MANTUA

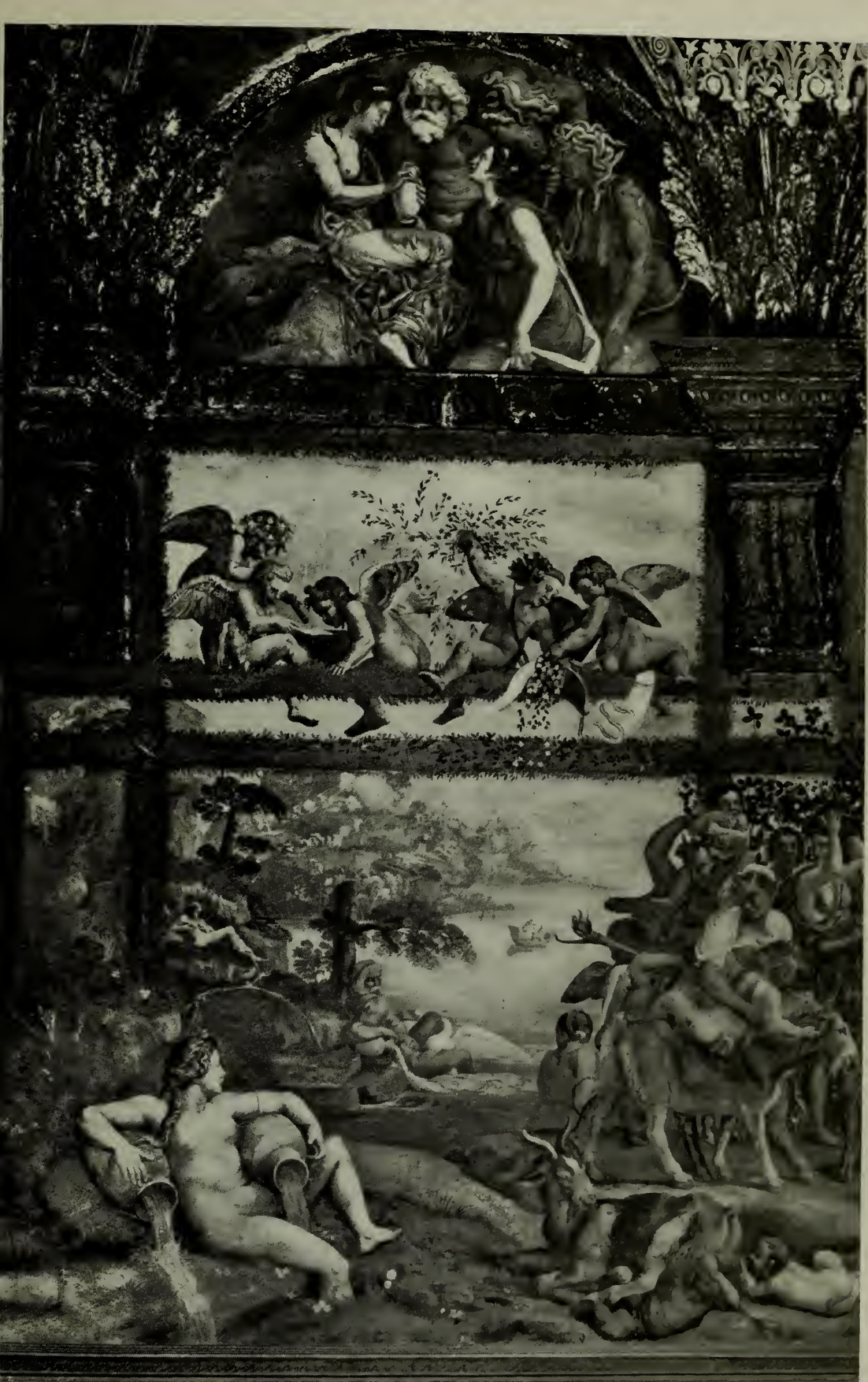
GIULIO ROMANO

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING-FEAST OF CUPID AND PSYCHE











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pleasing, something that is beautiful in this work; but it soon degenerates into the toy absurdities, the Jack-in-the-box horrors of the Fall of the Giants. The good Vasari admired them without stint, and Dickens, in his pictures from Italy, lent them his own vivid fancy, unknowing that it was Dickens, not Giulio, who was weird and powerful. These giants, if once taken out from among the tumbling squares of stone, might wag silly wire-set jaws as nutcrackers or as Santa Claus figures in a toy-shop window; that would be their scope of fulfilment in any modern performance of striking terror.

The portraits of the ducal horses in the Camera dei Cavalli are much more like them than the human figures are like men and women; for horses, having been less frequently painted, Giulio felt it here desirable to study his models and imitate them, instead of generalizing nature from the rendering of a century of painters.

Besides the Reggia and the Palazzo del T. there are other things to visit in Mantua: among them the very beautiful interior and curious façade of Alberti's Church of Sant' Andrea, which, as is usual with Italian churches, owes some of its most important features to men who lived and worked long after the original designer was dead. In the church is Mantegna's tomb with Sperandio's bust of him,



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a grand, grim face with shaggy hair; it once had diamond eyes, they told us, and if it had they were appropriate to the man who saw nature always bordered by cleanly cut, definite, yet delicate outlines.

Mantua is best out of doors, for it is one of the unspoiled Italian cities, with wide, stately streets of later centuries and narrow tortuous ones of earlier times, the latter full of quaintness, while the waterfront of the town with its ancient bridges, and the towers of the Reggia, is picturesque everywhere.

Giulio Romano remodelled its cathedral, and did much throughout the city to make it "Mantova la Gloriosa." He lived here for many years, and built a fine house for himself, a palace indeed, not far from the T. It has window-boxes, neat lace curtains, and is well kept; the artist would not complain of its appearance, and if his ghost walks, it walks complacent.



### III

“I SAY to all painters that none should ever imitate the manner of another ; for if he does, he will become the grandchild, not the child of nature. For models so abound in nature that we should go to them rather than to other masters. I do not say this for those who follow art as a means to the acquirement of riches, but for those who wish to gain from it glory and honor.” Thus wrote the most universal-minded of those who have handled chisel and brush, Leonardo da Vinci ; he followed his precept more than did others perhaps, yet even he departed from it now and again. For in the long line of artists every one has looked at nature partly through his own eyes, partly through the works of others, contemporaries or predecessors. The greatest men had their precursors, and if we would ask for an answer to Leonardo, for a proof that intense admiration and devoted study of the works of others, do not stifle, do not necessarily even dull the edge of individuality, we find this proof established, this answer made clearly, perhaps oftener than anywhere else, in the works of Andrea Mantegna. To no man who has lived was the art of

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the ancient Romans more worshipful, more worthy of passionate and sustained study, yet hardly any painter has been more individual. The veriest tyro in art can see in Andrea's work the influence of the ancient Romans. Yet he is precisely one of the few primitive masters who produce at least a momentary effect on that most limited and prejudiced person, the beginner in the study of modern art.

In these days of advanced art-criticism, when the new-school writer is a sleuth-hound at tracing "influences," he who notes that a man may look hard at the works of others, yet be individual and original, may scarcely pass for a teller of new things, yet it is of interest to find that some of the *most* individual of artists have been precisely those who passionately loved the work of fore-runners. To be but an eclectic is pitiable, to be eclectic is excellent. Sometimes the extraneous influence is immediate, sometimes it is that of precursors a millennial dead; in the case of almost every artist it is existent, subtle, or strong. Rembrandt and Velasquez are unusual examples; but take the others, the greatest of them, the most rounded, the most individual. Who can imagine the young Titian without Giorgione, who was perhaps as *sui generis* as either the Dutchman or the Spaniard. Correggio, a Parmesan hermit, creat-

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ing, if any Italian did ever create, found some of his tricks, his foreshortenings, for instance, ready to hand, played now and again by Mantegna and Melozzo da Forli. Donatello, though a much greater sculptor than Luca della Robbia, owed a far heavier debt to ancient art. Raphael submitted to "influences" wherever he might find them, stuffed them into his mental *scarsella*, and took them out again whenever needed, for adaptation. Michelangelo, with an individuality that stood forth almost a menace to the art of his time, studied Donatello, borrowed from Quercia, remembered Signorelli, learned by heart the abdominal muscles of the Farnese torso.

Even Leonardo the preceptor loved the regularity of the Greek, and forgot his talk about nature so far as to entertain himself by drawing scores of chic heads which some not unenlightened critics have so mistaken as to call profoundly studied, confounding their treatment with that of other heads by the same master which are studied indeed. As for Giotto himself, the arch-precursor, had he not studied Giovanni Pisano mightily. Giovanni, again, did he not reflect the French fourteenth century sculpture on one side of his art, and on the other side that of his father Niccola, who, far-sighted beyond the men of thirty generations, looked backward through the dark ages to the steady light of the

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ancients that shone beyond. Thus it is all a house that Jack built, with Jack so remote in the historic past that Ictinus is a modern to him. Yet if it is a chain, if each man has inherited, each great man has increased his inheritance, until, though he be a link to bind, he is also a free man, lord of a personality, to have and hold, and lend out all at once. Such an one is Andrea Mantegna.

We remember well how a very young art-student for the first time trod the slippery waxed floors of the Louvre museum, and, passing down the long gallery, wandered into that of the early Italian masters. On the way he had found time to be terribly disappointed before certain pictures that bore upon the dull gilt of their frames a tablet inscribed "Raphael Sanzio." The student did not know that but a short month later his worship for the "divino maestro" would begin, when his own master should send him to copy certain engravings, translations only, by one Marco Antonio, but which *must* somehow be nearer, so he felt, to the conception of a world-famous Raphael, than could be that little wooden red-and-blue lady "*dite la Belle Jardinière*," or those black and smoky pictures Saint Michael, and the Holy Family called of Francis I. In the room of the primitive masters, the Botticelli's and Filippino's entertained the student; he thought them "queer," and before the very early masters' works, the mira-

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cles in some *predella*, for instance, he stood in the fulness of a cheerfulness that took no thought of art.

Presently, on the east side of the room, he stopped short before a medium-sized panel (he thought it was a canvas) representing the Crucifixion. Romans these, "queer" again, decidedly queer, but also and just as decidedly something more than queer. How strange their legs were! long and thin as pipe-stems, hard as glass, sharp as metal, and the very earth, too, seemed made up of layers of iron. The student did not as yet quite know what style was (has anybody *ever* quite known), but he felt instinctively that these soldiers had an air of their own, and he lingered, desiring their better acquaintance. Close by was a picture called the *Madone de la Victoire*, with kneeling figures, one of them in full armor save for his head. The student liked armor, and had tried to draw knights. All this was only by a primitive Italian, naturally a very limited person, and yet he seemed to know better how armor looked and was worn, than did any modern painter whom the student remembered. Nevertheless this was dry, thin painting with not a "fat" touch in it, and this particular student had come to Paris at a time when loaded brushing was a *sine qua non* and when in the *ateliers d'élèves* nobody before Rembrandt or Velasquez was worth discussing; so the student, in spite of tempt-



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ing peculiarities in the master was satisfied to pay him the *sotto voce* compliment of "draws rather well" and to pass on. But he remembered the panels, and on a second visit liked them still better. Twenty years after, when he read in the essay of a French critic, "who knows if we may not even call Andrea Mantegna the prince of draughtsmen of all time," that student, grown wiser, though he thought it a large proposition, did not combat it.

Mantegna, then, looked not only at Nature, but looked with passion and devotion upon the art of others, the art of the men who had been his fore-runners by a millennial and a half. From his own personality and the work of the Greeks and Romans, he evolved grandeur of style, dignity, rhythm, measure; from his own personality and the observation of nature, he acquired a robust naturalism to be used when needed, and the capacity for an untiring rendering of every kind of detail, and from his own personality and his loving study of Donatello, he gave to many of his figures a kind of feverishly vital movement, especially facial movement. If we wish examples, we may find the result of his study of the ancients, rhythm, restraint, and measure, notably in his Triumph of Cæsar, and in some of the Eremitani frescoes; of his observation of nature, in his Gonzaga portraits of the Mantuan Reggia, and in ten

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CAMERA DEGLI SPOSI

ANDREA MANTEGNA

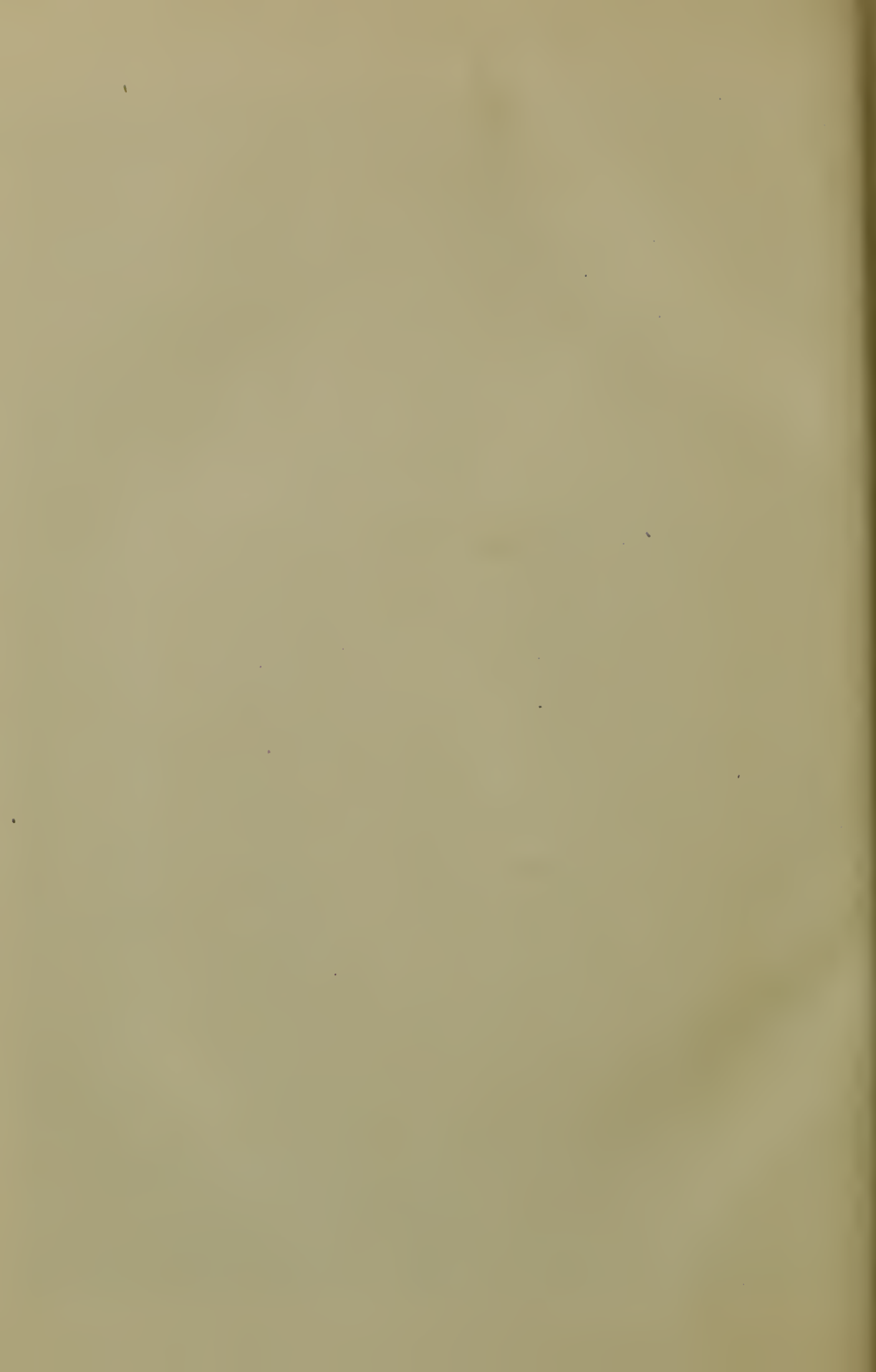
THE FAMILY OF THE MARQUIS OF MANTUA













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thousand details scattered throughout his work. If you would note the certain feverish vitality, common also to his great predecessor and contemporary, Donatello, look at Andrea's prints, engraved by himself, of the Taking down from the Cross, the Descent into Limbo, and compare the contorted faces, the mouths, which seem to be yelling rather than groaning their lamentations, the gesticulating limbs, the draperies which appear to share the excitement of those who wear them, with the faces, limbs, and draperies, which Donatello modelled for the Altar of Saint Anthony of Padua. Incidentally, remember also that Saint Anthony's is but ten minutes' walk removed from the Eremitani, where Mantegna afterwards painted a famous cycle, and that when Donatello began his reliefs in 1446, "*Andreas Patavinus*" was already arrived at the impressionable age of fifteen years, and was to paint two years later for Santa Sofia of Padua, a picture now lost, which, says Vasari, "might be taken for the work of an old, experienced master rather than of a youth." No need to ask if that "youth" watched the growing handiwork of Donato Fiorentino, whom the Paduans admired so much that the sturdy Tuscan feared lest his own high standard should be lowered, and longed for the sapient criticism of Via Larga and the Piazza della Signoria.

Only two instances of Mantegna's admiration for

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Donatello have been chosen here, but they abound. As for his close observation of nature, it may be noted in almost everything that he did. He carefully studied the furrows and cracks in the earth, every pebble, and shell, and herb, the fruits and flowers in his garlands, and each tiny detail in the distant cities of his backgrounds, while the ornament which he lavished upon his architecture (see the right-hand panel of his Uffizi triptych) was executed with a care perhaps unequalled by any Renaissance painter.

To chronicle close recording, minute finish, is to awake a doubt whether such is not necessarily a hindrance to forceful expression. That it is so, cannot be denied. Mantegna succeeded in *spite* of his rendering of every detail, and this success is an interesting text to write upon. Andrea recorded, because he was able to record, because he loved the shapes of things, and his pencil was trained as well as inspired beyond that of others about him. Much has been written, especially by the followers of the schools of Ruskin and Rio, concerning the deliberate simplicity of early masters. Now, as far as modelling in detail is concerned, it is very doubtful whether any one of the early masters ever thought about the "lamp of sacrifice" at all. They left out detail, because they were unable to accomplish detail. Giotto and Masaccio had the sentiment of simplicity; yet,

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it is almost certain that they would not have dared to be quite so simple, if they had possessed more of the science of modelling. They did not possess any more than they showed; they did not deliberately eschew this science, nor disdain it; neither did they struggle to acquire it, because, as yet, the time had not come for its acquisition, and they were still enormously preoccupied with other problems. To express and compose were Giotto's two great problems, and when for a hundred years the *Giotteschi* had confused their masters' methods without (save in one or two rare instances) developing them, Masaccio's problems became again pretty much the same as Giotto's. Anatomy and perspective put an end to simplicity for nearly an hundred years; a certain amount of it remained in frescoes for causes inherent to the material used, but into altar-pieces and tempera work the masters put every bit of anatomy, modelling, and perspective that they were able to accomplish.

Mantegna united these qualities more completely than did the others, and used them more easily. Best of all, he added to them so lofty a sentiment that he succeeded in resolving an almost impossible proposition: he *achieved grandeur without simplicity*. No wonder Albert Dürer counted among his greatest sorrows that while he was journeying to meet Andrea, Death outstripped the pious pilgrim, and

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took the great Italian before his spiritual kinsman could reach him.

We have considered Mantegna's derivations, let us look at the material of which he made up his art work, — his types, his architecture, his ornaments — and then speak of the technique which he brought to bear upon his creation; his drawing, color, and composition.

We have already found him educated beyond most of his fellows; closely observant of nature; an adorer of ancient art; a master of movement, rhythmical and stately, or quick and almost feverish, and a man who loved to paint studiously, caressingly, such tiny detail as that of shells and fruits and flowers. Add to all this that his outline, even at its sharpest, was delicately sensitive, and what material for a decorator we have, and what a decorator he became! Taking Andrea's figures, we may roughly divide them into the pseudo-Roman, the realistic contemporaneous, and the ideal types of saints, angels, and holy personages. It is most of all in his Triumph of Cæsar, next in certain of the Eremitani frescoes, that Mantegna developed his Roman types; and perhaps, before saying more of them, it is well to note that in the frescoes, the very first impression is made by the architecture. In the cartoons of the Triumph, the accessories, though less important

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than in the Eremitani pictures, are also very notable.

In the frescoes Andrea has fairly lavished his architecture, and has revelled in his stage-setting; in one of them an arch of triumph fills the whole background, in others are palaces, colonnades, arched passages, pillars, pilasters, and piers. This architectural framing dominates, and it may be said here that Andrea's elaboration of perspective, even more than his elaboration of detail, interfered with the unity of impression produced by each fresco as a whole. The science is too apparent; he wishes to know all, and doesn't mind your knowing that he knows; the architecture is too emphatic, and the emphasis is increased by the fact that this master of linear perspective was, like most of the other primitives, sadly hampered when he came to a question of atmospheric perspective. He is, however, in like case with many another; for, save in the hands of a very few Venetians and Umbrians, the fifteenth century background would no more "down" than would Banquo's ghost. Andrea's buildings are, after all, only in the second plane, not the third or fourth; and, for all that atmospherically they do not "know their places," they are splendid and stately frames, more accountable perhaps than any other one thing for the effect of the frescoes. If his architecture is all antique, his costumes are, in three



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of the rectangles of the Eremitani frescoes, frankly *quattrocento*; in the others, they are of that pseudo-Roman character which we may call Mantegnesque.

That he would have had them altogether Roman, we do not doubt; but the great artist cannot forget himself wholly, for even in his most earnest admiration Mantegna's personality asserts itself, as it should; he is more violent than the Greek, and he refines upon the later Roman. His people sometimes move with a nervous brusqueness that is unsculptural and therefore un-pagan; more often they stand statuesquely, or march rhythmically, as in the Triumph. Their long, thin bodies are evolved directly from Andrea's own personality. In the Triumph, they have much of antique grace; in the frescoes, it is combined with a great deal of mediæval meagreness. They are of that type which Mantegna preferred to all others, in which there is a mixture of ugliness with great elegance and even beauty, leaning now to the beauty side, with the striplings and children of the Mantuan cartoons, now to the side of ultra-elongation, as in the Crucifixion of the *predella* of San Zeno, — the type with a powerful, sharply-muscled thorax, slender but elegantly graceful arms and legs, and very small heads. In the latter, there is a hardness rarely absent from Mantegna's work, but they do very well as Romans, for the models who sat for him in Virgil's

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Mantua or Antenor's (?) Padua were natives of a province that sent forth many such legionaries as look out still between jugulars of steel or under leathern cap on Trajan's column. The youths, senators, and soldiers, in the engravings of his Triumph are far freer than those of his frescoes, and attain the highest point of excellence reached by his classical figures. They are a whole world removed in their graceful-grim elegance from Filippino's people of the Florentine Strozzi Chapel, who seem quite vulgar in comparison; yet they are not Romans at all, but forms evolved by a great painter whose artistic temperament was a part of his own time, and who was helped, not hindered, by a wise indulgence of that temperament, and by choosing his material when and where it was most congenial to him and most fitted for assimilation. And thus he answers those critics who would limit his field; he shows, as have hundreds of others before and after him, that the true artist inherits from art as well as from nature; that he cannot copy the art which has gone before him, because he has a temperament which is a part of himself and consequently of his race and time; that his temperament will assert itself; that his time will environ and compel him; that what is put into the crucible of his brain will come out *his*, personal to him, personal to his epoch, ten times the better for that, yet

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enhanced by every past good thing that he has looked upon and loved. If it were otherwise, if those were right who base personality upon isolation, we should shut the schools, turn our artist into a pasture with Giotto's bit of stone in his hand and his sheep before him. Then if he had the luck to have Giotto's genius, we should (if we were logical) thank God that he was not consummate, that is to say, a Raphael or Titian with two centuries of acquirement behind him.

When we examine Andrea's contemporaneous types, it is at once evident that he liked character heads better than portrait heads. He painted rather his beloved Romans or his bushy-haired apostles, than the likenesses of the people about him. The great collective portrait-fresco in the Camera degli Sposi of the Mantuan Reggia is the most complete example of his realism. He does not move easily under the burden of this unaccustomed task, neither do his subjects. They at first seem to the spectator to make up a sort of strange *tableau vivant*, to be stricken into immobility, to be staring, uncouth, wooden, and in certain cases gifted with rare ugliness. This feeling does not wholly depart, but soon we realize that these people are impressive in their gravity; that there are handsome heads, old and young, among them, and that they who are unhandsome, the large-featured duke, the

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square-faced duchess with her strange head-gear, the sharp-featured children, the dwarf, looking a very old doll, are not easily forgotten. The men, all save the duke, wear the girdled doublet in wide pleats so popular at the time; the youths move very slowly, almost heavily about, and it is noticeable that, in the treatment of their legs, Andrea remembers that here he is a realist. There is no conventional elongation for elegance's sake as in the San Zeno crucifixion; these legs, though not clumsy, are, save in one case, normally thick, and the silk and woollen tight-hose have at once banished a great part of the muscular detail given to his Romans. These Gonzaga nobles are brothers in solemn imperturbability to the figures in Piero della Francesca's Legend of the Cross. The men in the Martyrdom of Saint Christopher are in mediæval costume, indeed some among them are called portraits; they suggest, in a measure, Signorelli's soldiers, but are sharper-featured, less ferocious, and far less swaggering.

In his purely sacred pictures Andrea's type of the Madonna is akin to Bellini's, in that she is always the close-hooded descendant of the Byzantine Maries; there is no opportunity for the picturesque arrangement of hair and veil dear to the Tuscans; the limitation is trying, and calls for greater feeling for facial beauty in women than Mantegna pos-



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sessed. Like Bellini, again, he was uneven in his presentation of Madonna; in the superb altar-piece of San Zeno she is sweet looking, but not beautiful, sometimes she is fat-faced and heavy. The suavest of his Maries, in our remembrance, is in Dresden; the ugliest (if the picture be a genuine Mantegna) is in the Civic Museum of Verona. In the delightful army of Italian *putti*, Andrea's hold honorable office; real babies hardly existed in antique art, so Mantegna could obtain no inspiration from his Romans, and it is rather the *angioletti* of Giambellini who are the brothers to Andrea's children of the San Zeno Madonna. We suspect, too, that the latter try to look like the little bronze musicians of the famous Paduan altar, but they are not so forceful as Donato's *putti*, nor so winning as Bellini's. Their eyes have an appearance often noted in *quattrocento* work, of looking out through button-holes; their mouths are very round; their flesh is as hard as rubber; when they have grown a little older, and hold up an inscription in the "Camera degli Sposi," they have reached an age where their prototypes may be found in antique art, and therefore their flesh has hardened into marble. Yet they have great elegance; the Christ child in the San Zeno altar-piece is lovely; the one in the Dresden picture has journeyed far in the direction of Raphael; were his flesh to soften a



DRESDEN

GALLERY

ANDREA MANTEGNA

MADONNA, CHILD AND SAINTS









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little more he might, save that he lacks the wide-eyed, inspired look, remind one not a little of the Urbinate's babies. Solidly built as he is though, he is not the infant Hercules which John Baptist and the *putto*, even at times the Christ child, became in Raphael's latter Roman work. We have chosen to mention the best of the Mantegna *putti*; many of them, very many indeed, are commonplace and clumsy.

In immediate relation to his flying children is a purely decorative and altogether delightful element in Mantegna's pictures, of which he was, if not the inventor, at least the typical adapter to pictorial purpose. He brought to a fuller color-life the Robbia garlands of green and white, and swung them across his frescoes. They are heavier and thicker than Luca's festoons, so heavy, indeed, that infant geniuses easily ride astride or climb them like trees. Flowers and fruits almost as solid-looking as the glazed earthen pears and apples of the Robbia are set in them with a perfect regularity which, like the formalizing of Italian gardens, makes them but the more decorative. Crivelli borrowed them from Mantegna in his own time, and everybody else has borrowed them since. We have to do here with Andrea's painting, not with his life; but one of his letters to the Duke of Mantua is so amusing in its suggestion of contemporaneous borrowing for



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another purpose, that a reference to it is tempting. That this master, so dignified in all that pertained to his work, was intensely irritable and childishly ready at times to attribute importance to trifling matters, is proved more than once by documents, and on this particular occasion he wrote to no less a person than the Duke of Mantua. His tribulation was great; many of his quinces, his *pomicodogni*, had vanished from his garden, and their departure justified in his mind all evil thought of his next neighbors, well-to-do Mantuan gentlemen. The Duke interfered, so did the tribunal, and a verdict was finally rendered; first that certain quinces had disappeared from Andrea's garden; and secondly, that some one had apparently assisted them to disappear. No further satisfaction could be afforded by the testimony, and it is not unlikely that Mantegna long afterwards painted his garlands with regretful thoughts of loved and lost *pomicodogni*.

Having glanced, if ever so hastily, at types, architecture, and ornament, the material from which Mantegna evolved his art, let us even more briefly consider his technique, his drawing, color, and composition. M. Müntz has already been cited in reference to Andrea's design. The critic's question cannot be answered; for there are many ways of approaching the summit of Parnassus, and its up-

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per slopes throne many who, as our mood changes, may sit in turn with Apollo. Raphael and Michael, Leonardo and Titian, Correggio, the Veronese, and Tintoretto, make up a charmed circle, and when the threshold of the sixteenth century is crossed, the gates swing together, closing upon an older and a different order of things, where the masters whom we call primitive must still linger, deprived of the wholly rounded perfection, that came to those of the High Renaissance.

But though they may be without it, nearest to this circle, in *our* hearts at least, sit the earnest Giambellini and the lofty-minded Andrea.

M. Müntz in his enthusiasm sounds the keynote, for Mantegna, in his challenge to posterity, stands firmly as one of his Romans, upon design and style, those bases of pictorial art. His draughtsmanship has already been considered at some length in reference to his figures. No matter how harsh the latter may be, his outline, in most of his wall-pictures, all of his engravings, and nearly all of his distemper panels, is delicate and sensitive, full of character, full also of grace in his Roman striplings of the Triumph and in figures like his acolyte of the Uffizi triptych. His modelling is close and dry, and his draperies and architectural ornaments are sometimes almost painfully elaborated.

With his design must be reckoned his treatment

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of perspective, which he made an important, perhaps too important, part of that design. He came just after the time when Brunelleschi taught and Paolo Uccello studied that "delightful thing perspective." The knowledge of it bred a pride that verged upon pedantry in many a master, and Andrea made it so apparent that at times his science rather interferes with the complete enjoyment of the spectator. Nevertheless, he performed with it some very pretty feats, adding to the attractiveness of his work, especially in his placing of his foreground figures exactly upon the floor line of his composition in wall panels to be seen from below (as in the *Triumph* and the *Eremitani*), and then making the feet of his people of the second plane vanish behind his horizon, but he was still at the point where he cared more for the solution of the problem than for any enhancement afforded by it to his picture. One sees this especially in his famous *Dead Christ* of the Brera Gallery. The picture has been called beautiful in its foreshortening. It is admirable, inasmuch as skill and perfect sincerity are always admirable, but it is most unbeautiful. The custom, too, has been to call his circular ceiling of the *Sposi Camera* lovely, with its violently foreshortened putti and its faces of homely women looking over a balustrade; but it is rather fresh, curious, inventive, skilful, a not very handsome

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novelty which has been the point of departure of men who, following upon its lines, have somewhat relaxed their tension, have chosen more agreeable silhouettes, and have found effects which really are pleasing.

The pioneers in the treatment of violent perspective handled stubborn material, but they were real pioneers, pathfinders to new forms of beauty. Had not the science of perspective been so new to art in Andrea's time, he would have handled it with less of the investigating, the experimental, and more of the artistic spirit, for he was an admirable composer of line and mass, and knew quite well when his silhouette was disagreeable.

Mantegna loved to compose, and liked to handle a great deal of material at a time; Madonna and the Child quite by themselves by no means tempted him as a subject, as they did his brother-in-law Bellini, for instance. Andrea liked a procession much better, or a whole scene elaborately set, with architecture and landscape. His draperies, though dignified in general disposition, were in detail what the French would call tormented, full of little crinkly folds that seemed to suggest the copper-plates of Nuremberg, and to emphasize the fact that Andrea was engraver as well as painter. For a *quattrocentisto* he composed well with light. He knew well the effect of light falling upon objects in the round; yet

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it cannot be said that he enveloped his figures, for he seemed to see everything in nature circumscribed by a pure line. In his expression through design, he exhibited a dual artistic personality; pushed a little further in one direction, his Judith of the Uffizi might form part of a Greek vase painting; pushed a little further in the opposite direction, his Gonzaga nobles of the Mantuan Castello would become caricatures. Though an earnest student of the antique marbles, he was a keen observer of contemporary life as well. Moving in this wide gamut of elevated realism and noble idealism, he always preserved a loftiness of feeling which made him at times a peer of Michelangelo, while he possessed a *terribilità* of his own a quarter of a century before the great Tuscan began to work. His love of sculptural repose and dignity did not prevent him from being intensely dramatic in his *predella* of the San Zeno Madonna, and although his figures, like those of Giovanni Bellini in his Pietà, often grimace and distort their features, yet the contortion which became pathos with Giovanni deepened into tragedy with Andrea.

As might have been predicted, this lover of sculpture was lacking in feeling for color, a deficiency which few critics have noted, and which the late Paul Mantz has characterized admirably, remarking that Mantegna was a "brilliant but



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rather venturesome colorist," and that, "tones which are fine, if considered by themselves, are heard above the general harmony of the music, and are rather autonomous than disciplined." For example, the colors in the Madonna of Saint Zeno are rich and beautiful in themselves, but Andrea has placed a brilliant corn-colored robe in the left-hand lower corner of one of the shutters of the triptych, which distracts the eye from the really important portions of the picture; while branches of vermilion coral and yellow fruits are dispersed here and there among his decorative accessories without any suggestion of choice as to their place, or of relation to the effect on the composition as a whole. In his earlier works, the frescoes of the Eremitani of Padua, Andrea is in his coloring like a child with a toy paint-box, spotting out impartially here a yellow mantle and there a green tunic without reference to any general scheme of color. He learned later from Bellini to use rich, strong tones in the Madonnas of San Zeno at Verona, and of Victory in the Louvre. Whether the unevenness, the lack of composition of color in those works, was wholly Andrea's fault, we cannot tell, for in considering the color of these, as of many old pictures, we are unable to speak with confidence, since time has so altered the relations that we can no longer in any-wise verify the master's original arrangement, and

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alterations would be peculiarly apt to occur in the heavy garlands of Andrea with their coral and fruits, where the strong reds may have remained brilliant, while the greens have fallen into warm, deep browns. Nevertheless, when all allowance is made, it must be confessed that this mighty master of style and of composition of lines was almost wholly lacking in the sense of color-composition. Indeed it could hardly be expected that the same temperament which could so keenly perceive, and so adequately render the grave music of noble and exquisite line could be equally susceptible to the deep-chorded harmonies of rich and subdued color.

Considering his whole product, his cartoons and his wall pictures, his tempera work and his engraving, we find that immediately after the five or six greatest names in the history of Italian art comes that of Andrea Mantegna; he stands at the head of the group of secondary painters which counted Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, and Filippino, Bellini, Signorelli, and Perugino among its members. His name brings with it the memory of a lofty and intensely characterized style, of figures of legionaries, long and lean as North-American Indians, Roman in their costume, mediæval in their sharp, dry silhouette; of saints, hard and meagre, but statuesquely meagre; of figures stern almost to fierceness, yet

## MANTUA

exquisitely refined in the delicacy of their outline ; of realistic Mantuan nobles impressive in their ugliness ; of stately Madonnas ; of charming boy angels, flying or holding up festoons of flowers and fruits ; of delicate youthful figures with long curling hair and crinkled drapery, where every tiny fold is finished as if in a miniature ; of canvases filled with long files of captives, with chariots loaded with treasure, with sky lines broken by standards and trophies, with armored legionaries, curvetting horses, elephants with jewelled frontlets, and with statues towering above the crowd ; of processions where the magnificent vulgarity of ancient Rome and the confused lavishness of an antique triumph are subdued to measured harmonies and sculptural lines.

Mantegna's is essentially a virile genius ; he does not charm by suggestiveness, nor please by *morbidezza* ; he lacks facile grace and feeling for facial beauty ; he is often cold, sometimes even harsh and crude, and in his disdain for prettiness and his somewhat haughty distinction, he occasionally impresses us with a rather painful sense of superiority. Something of the antique statues that he loved and studied and collected entered into his own nature and his work. As Angelico was the Saint, and Leonardo the Magician, Mantegna was the Ancient Roman of Art. His were the Roman virtues,—so

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briety, dignity, self-restraint, discipline, and a certain masterliness, as indescribable as it is impressive,—and to those who appreciate austere beauty and the pure harmonies of exquisite lines, Mantegna's art will always appeal.

THE END.



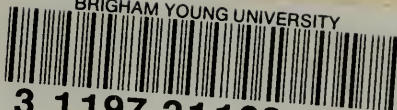








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